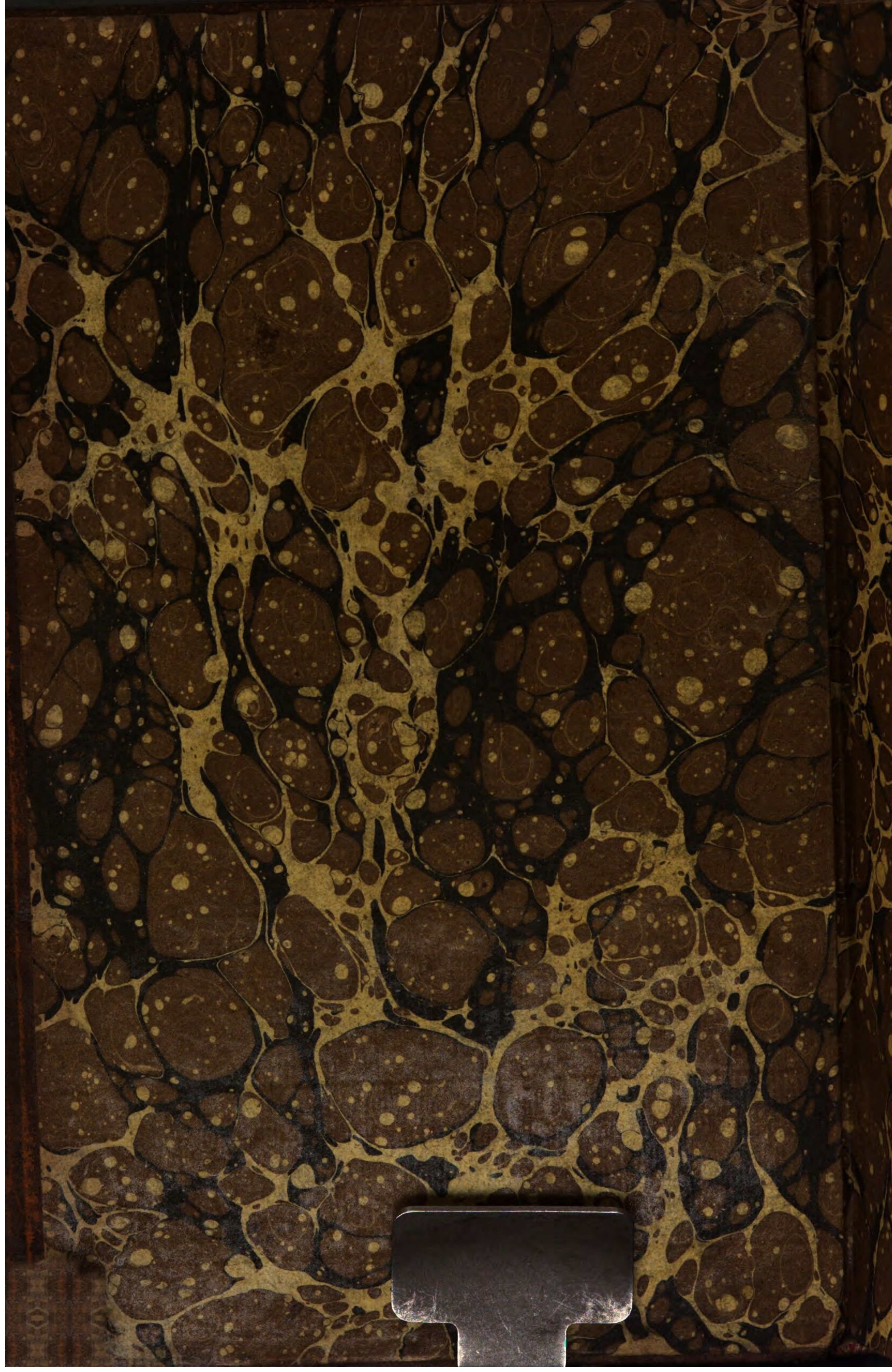
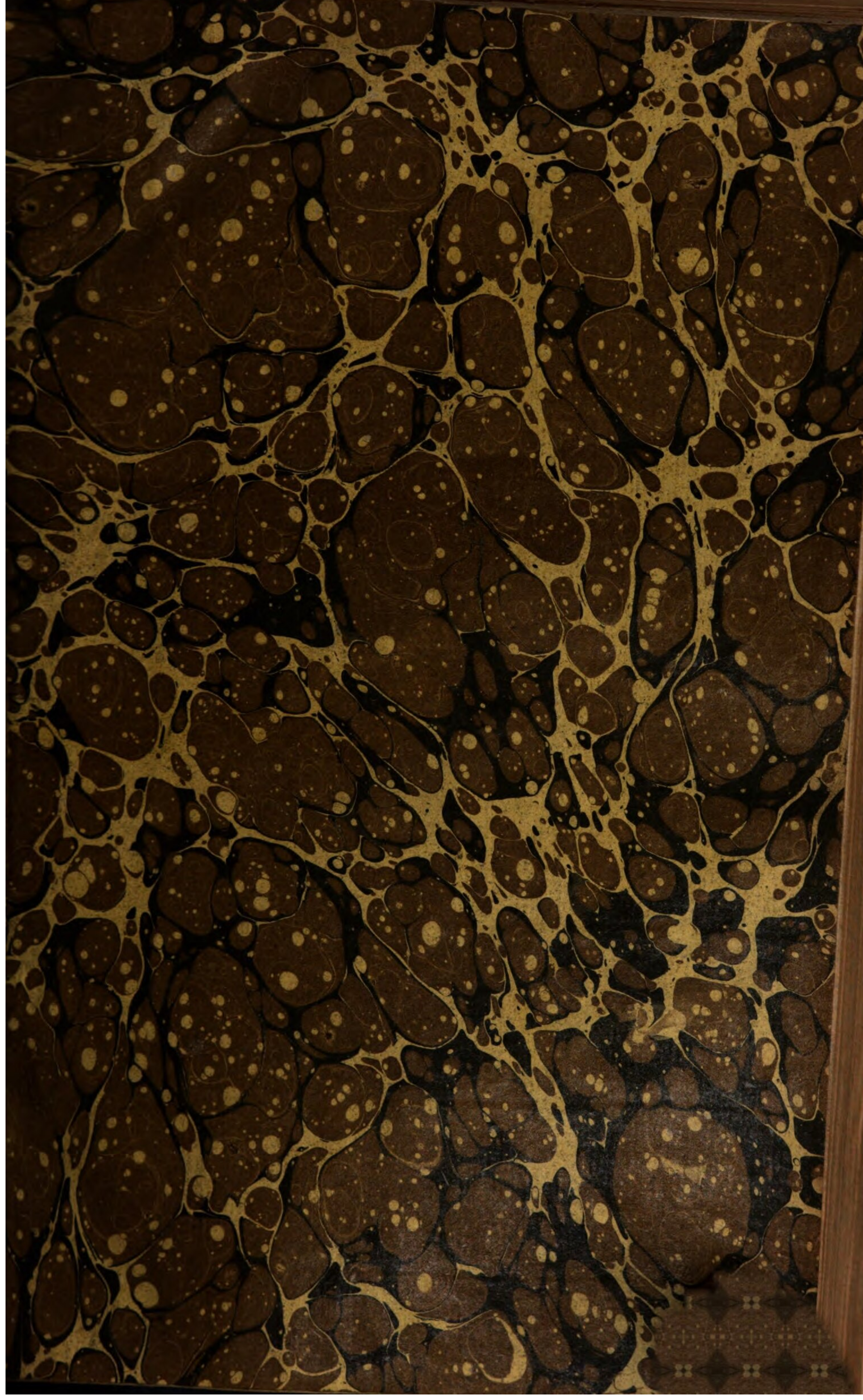








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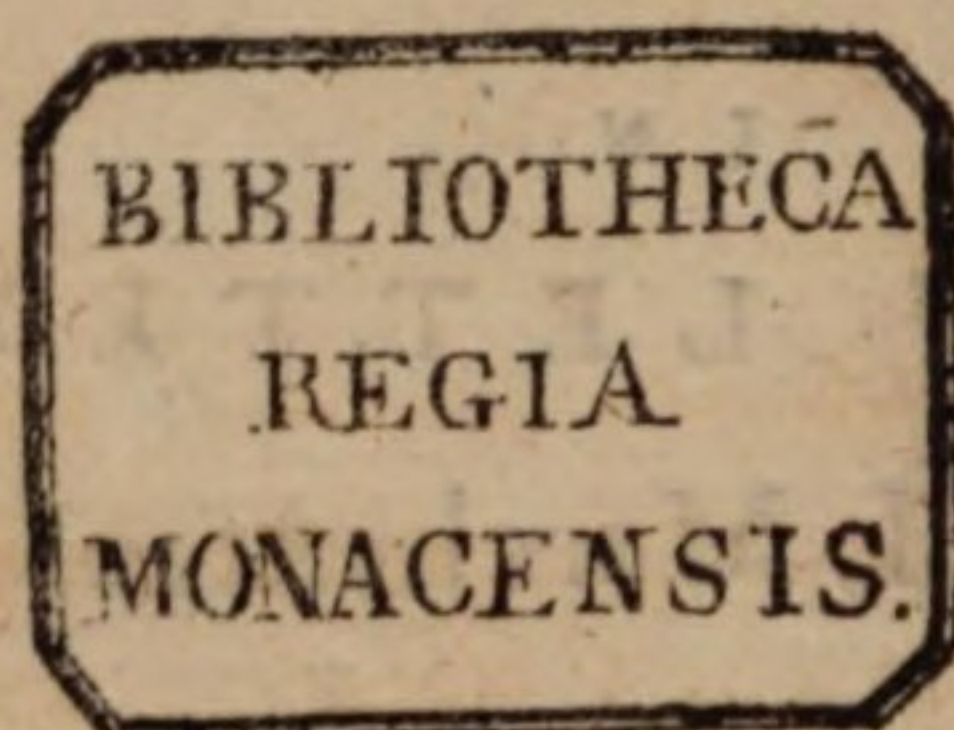
THE
A P O L O G Y
OF
Benjamin Ben Mordecai
TO HIS FRIENDS,
FOR EMBRACING
CHRISTIANITY;
IN
SEVEN LETTERS
To ELISHA LEVI, Merchant, of *Amsterdam*.
TOGETHER WITH
An EIGHTH LETTER,
ON THE
GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST.
WITH
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE SECOND EDITION, WITH
ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS, AND A COPIOUS INDEX.

By HENRY TAYLOR, A. M.
RECTOR of *Crawley*, and VICAR of *Portsmouth*, in *Hants*.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N:
P R I N T E D F O R
C. DILLY, in the *Poultry*; and R. ROBSON, *New Bond Street*.
M.DCC.LXXXIV.



BY HENRY TAYLOR, A. M.

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VOLUME THE SECOND.

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MDCCLXXIV.

LETTER THE FIFTH.

It has always been my desire, to see Religion treated as a *rational* thing; free from all Absurdity and Folly.—The Religion of *Nature* is capable of the strictest Evidence; and therefore *that* is never to be deviated from, or given-up. The Religion of *Christ*, as it lies in the *new Testament*, is perfectly agreeable-to, and consistent-with, what *natural* Religion teacheth; and so it will be always found by them, that examine into its Truth with sincerity.

Pref. to the second Edition of Dr. Sykes' Essay
on the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I HAVE shewn, in my last Letter; that, according to our own Prophecies, the *Messiah* ought to have come before the destruction of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem*: and that the Prophecies of Him have been fulfilled, in the Person of *Jesus Christ*; who answers in every respect to the prophetic character of the

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Messiah;

Messiah; and can be no other, if *our* Prophecies be true.

And therefore, when I was beginning this Letter, I proposed to enter immediately upon considering the mediatorial Scheme of Salvation by Him; and, as I went along, to take Notice of all the Objections to it, which appeared to be of any considerable moment: and to explain the System of Christianity, consistently with the *old* Testament, the Attributes of *God*, and the Nature of *Man*. For I knew, by Experience; that, whatever might be the *external* Evidence of Christianity; yet, if it's *Doctrines* did not appear consistent with *these*, neither *Jew* nor *Deist* would stay to examine it: but would argue against it *à priori*, that such a Revelation could not possibly be *divine*; even though it should appear to be confirmed by Miracles(*a*). But, when I began to consider my subject with this view I found it necessary, before I could proceed, to lay down a clear and distinct Notion of those very Principles and *Criteria*, by which the Truth of the Christian Religion is to be examined; and to make it the business of the present Letter to consider the Nature of *Man*, the Attributes of *God*, and the method of his moral Government over Mankind, as far as this subject is concerned; and to clear the Scripture Doctrine

(*a*) See Letter IV. p. 563. note (*b*).

of the *Fall*, and a *mediatorial Redemption*, from some of the false representations of its Friends and Enemies.

To this purpose, in the first place, I shall consider the Nature of *Man*: because, if a Revelation be *divine*, it must be agreeable to the Nature of those Beings to whom it is revealed. Almighty God hath given to his Creatures their particular Natures and Qualities; that they may be able to serve those Ends and Uses, for which he made them: and consequently, he will govern them according to those Natures and Qualities; for a Being of infinite Wisdom will always be consistent, through the whole Course of his Providence: He will not require Vegetables to act by *Choice* or *Volition*; nor the Brutes to live by the Laws of moral Rectitude; nor one Man to govern himself by an other's Understanding and Conscience: But he will require of every intelligent Being, according to the Capacity he has given him; and, as far as he is *capable* of knowing how he ought to act, so far, and no farther, his Duty will extend; for no Person can be under a moral Obligation to do, what his Understanding is not able to inform him that he ought to do; after he has taken all the pains he can, either by himself or others, to know his Duty: but his moral Obligation will always be inseparable from, and commensurate to, the perception of Rectitude; for to see an action to

be *right*, is the same thing as to see that it *ought* to be performed. The Understanding therefore is to every man, after he has taken all the pains he is able for Information, the Boundary of his Duty: and Conscience is nothing else but the reflex Act of the Understanding upon the rectitude or obliquity of our Conduct. From hence it follows; that Obedience to the Understanding in all moral Concerns, is *Virtue*; and Opposition to it, is *Vice*: an intelligent Being can deserve Praise or Reward, no farther than as he acts agreeably to his intelligent Nature; nor Dispraise or Punishment, any farther than as he acts in opposition to it; and this is universally true; under all advantages or disadvantages whatsoever.

*Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum—*

The case is just the same, under the benefit of a Revelation; and under the dictates of unassisted Reason.

From hence it follows; that, if, upon a strict and impartial Examination into the Evidence in proof of a Revelation from God, our Understanding is not convinced; there can be no *merit* in believing it: for the *merit* of believing consists in opening our hearts to Evidence, and then determining as our Understanding directs. In like manner, if our Understanding, after the best Enquiry, is not able to direct us; what Revelation

velation comes from God, and what does not; there can be no more *merit*, in receiving a *true* Revelation; than a *false* one: it depends intirely upon Chance: and if in such a situation we should reject the Truth, and espouse the Error; it would not be our *Fault*, but our *Misfortune*; and we should deserve the Pity and Compassion, but by no means the Resentment, of those; who should be acquainted with the importance of the Truths we had rejected, and the ill consequences of the Errors we had espoused. But to apply Force and Violence, or any other Means in such cases, except Evidence and Reason, to convince the Understanding; is as inconsistent with the Nature of Man; as it is absurd and ridiculous, to think of forming Axioms out of Halts; or Syllogisms out of Chains and Gibbets.

The only way to convince the Understanding must be, to enlighten it with more abundant Evidence; or to shew the thing in a different light. By these means innumerable Truths, which are unattainable by mere Reason, and yet of very great Importance to our well-being; may be discovered to us by Revelation: for nothing can be proved, by the mere light of Reason; but what *necessarily* follows by the very *Nature* of things, and could not have been otherwise. Probable Conjectures may be made, from what God *has* done; to what he *may* or *will* do, in such circumstances as seem to us to be of a
like

like nature; but we can come to no Certainty, except where we can prove it contrary to the divine Attributes to act otherwise; for every thing, that depends upon the *mere* Will and Bounty of God, and the particular Time and Manner in which his Blessings are dispensed, can only be known by *Revelation*. And this Revelation must be consistent in every particular with the Nature and Reason of Man, wherever it relates to his moral Conduct; or else he would be obliged to act by two opposite and inconsistent Laws: which is an Absurdity to suppose.

Having said thus much concerning the Nature of *Man*; I shall proceed to explain, as far as is necessary to the present purpose, the Nature and Attributes of *God*. For, as nothing can become our Duty, which it is contrary to the Nature of *Man* to perform; so neither can any thing become our Duty, which is contrary to the Nature and Attributes of *God* to require.

Now the *moral* Attributes of God, which are chiefly to be considered upon this Subject, are those of Justice and Goodness; upon which I shall observe as follows—

1. The Justice or Righteousness of God may be considered positively, or negatively. The *positive* Justice of God consists, in giving to his Creatures as much Good; as they have any claim of Right to *expect*: and, if they have no claim of Right, his *positive Justice* is intirely out
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of the Question. The *negative* Justice of God, consists, in not extending the Punishment of his Creatures beyond their Guilt: that is, beyond what they have *deserved*.

I do not think it at all necessary here to enter into the Question; whether there be any immediate Connection in *nature* between Virtue and Reward, Vice and Punishment: Perhaps, there may not: But, when we consider God as the *moral* Governor of the Universe, it seems to follow of necessity, that He will encourage Virtue, and discourage Vice; by the dispensation of natural good and evil in such proportion, as to bring-about the end in view: for he promotes *Virtue*, by forming a Connection between moral and natural *Good*; and he deters from *Vice*, by forming a Connection between moral and natural *Evil*: and, when this is done in a *judicial* way, we say that God *rewards* good actions; and *punishes* the bad. And thus *Virtue* will be connected with *Reward*, and *Vice* with *Punishment*, by the introduction of a third link in the Chain; *viz.* the Ends of divine Government.

As to cases of mere Bounty and Favour; where more is given than hath been merited, or (if all Merit be excluded, by the perverseness of our actions;) wherever the deserved Punishment is forgiven, in whole, or in part; the Justice of God is not at all concerned. For it is no Injustice, to *dispense Favours*; where there is no prior Me-
rit

rit, or just Claim; as in Creation: or, where Punishment or Satisfaction might justly be required: as in Forgiveness. And therefore, in all such cases, God may withhold his Favours; or grant them, on what Terms he pleases; or *δωρεάν* that is, without any Terms or Conditions at all: as best serves the ends of his Government in promoting Virtue and Happiness.

There is, says Dr. *Whichcote*, a *Just*, which of Right *may* be done; and there is a *Just*, which of Right *must* be done (*b*): [or, as Mr. *Emlyn* expresses it, *quod fieri potest*; and *quod fieri debet*(*c*).] The rule or law of Righteousness *requires that* to be done, which justly ought to be done; but it doth not *require* every thing to be done, which justly *may* be done. Or, in other Words, Justice consists in giving every one what is *due to* him; but not in exacting all that is *due from* him: every Being having a Power and Right, to give freely what is his *own*; or to forgive what is his *due*, without Injustice. Otherwise, Justice would be inconsistent with Mercy and Bounty. And we do not find any attribute of God in the Scripture, which necessitates him to punish; wherever the Ends of his Government can be better served by Mercy, Bounty, and Forgiveness.

(*b*) *Aphorisms*, 490, 701.
 explains; *Tracts*, vol. i. p. 241.

(*c*) This he farther ex-

2. The *Goodness* of God, considered as distinct from his *Justice*, consists either in conferring *unmerited* Happiness; (that is, where there is no *prior* proportionable merit in the Person on whom it is conferred;) or in lessening or forgiving the Punishment, which might *justly* be inflicted.

But here again it must be observed; that, as *Justice* does not require every Punishment to be inflicted, which *may* be inflicted consistently with Justice; but the ends of divine government are always considered: So neither does *Goodness* require every Blessing to be conferred upon the Individuals, which may be consistent with Goodness. But even the Goodness or Bounty of God is carried-on for the good of the Whole; and must be frequently restrained by the ends of Government to promote the Virtue and Happiness of the *Whole*; with which many Evils among the Individuals may not only be consistent, but very necessary to promote them.

The Opinion of the *Christians*, with regard to the Providence of God and the general Law of his Government over all, is entirely agreeable to our own Scriptures. *They* believe, with *Us*, that no Man hath *seen* God at any time, nor *heard* his voice (*d*); and consequently, that God hath never appeared *in Person* to any of the Sons of

(*d*) *Job* i. 18.—*I Tim.* vi. 16.

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Men;

Men; but always by his Angel or Messenger: as when he is said to have appeared to *Aaron*, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the seventy Elders of *Israel*(*e*). And they believe, that every the minutest particle of Matter is known to Him; and the very Hairs of our Head numbered (*f*): that the smallest Animal is the object of his Care and Providence and Benevolence; and every individual Person through the infinity of Space, to whom he has given Understanding to govern *himself*; and every Parent in the Government of his Family, and every Magistrate in the Government of Society, and every King and Potentate in the Government of States and Empires, and Angels in the Government of Worlds or Systems of Worlds, or whatever Beings are superior to Angels; are all subject to his Superintendence; their Thoughts, as well as their Conduct, the Objects of his Knowledge and his Care; and all of them *accountable* to him for their Actions: and that he is always present to every part of his Government, and orders or executes what is best and wisest for the benefit and perfection of the whole; suffering in the mean time all the Weakness, Error and Folly, (which must unavoidably happen among imperfect Beings, in proportion to their imperfection;) as far as is fit and right to do so; and rectifying

(*e*) *Ex.* xxiv. 10. See Letter II. p. 228. (*f*) *Mat.*
x. 30.

them

them in his own time and manner, or teaching them how to rectify them themselves, as he sees to be most agreeable to Wisdom; and most proper to promote Virtue and Righteousness. For God does not govern the World by unintelligent Power; or by absolute Necessity, or Fate, or arbitrary Will; but by *free* and *unconstrained Volition*, and by *moral Laws*; and the End and Design of his Government is to extend moral Perfection and Happiness through the Universe. His *Existence* and his *natural* Attributes are *necessary*; and must therefore be always the *same*, in every respect and in all places; but his *Actions* are *free* and *voluntary*: He can begin and continue and determine them to what Time, Place, and Degree he pleases. “He made the World, not from any Necessity determining him; but when he *thought proper*. Matter is not necessary; but he created as much of it as he *thought proper*; he placed the System of the fixed Stars at various distances from each other, at his Pleasure. In the solar system he formed the Planets of such a number, and disposed them at such various distances from the Sun, as he pleased. He made them all move from West to East; though it is evident from the motion of Comets, that he might have made them move from East to West. In these and other instances we plainly perceive the vestiges of a *wise* agent; but acting *freely* and with per-

fect Liberty(g).” And herein consists his Goodness; that though he has all Power, which nothing can resist; yet he constantly *chooses*, without any possibility of Restraint upon him, to do that which is most *just* and *good*; and tends to the moral Perfection and Happiness of his Creatures.

As to the moral Attribute of Justice; Mr. *Theophilus Gale* has given us this strange account of it. “*Man*, says he, *wills* things; because “they are *just*: but things are therefore *just* with “*God*, because he *wills* them(*b*).” But is it possible; that the same Action, and under the same Circumstances, should be just, when performed by *one* Being; and unjust when performed by *an other*? May it not as safely be said; that a proposition may be *true* when asserted by *one* Being; and *false*, when asserted by *an other*? This was not the opinion of our Father *Abraham*; when he drew near to God, and said; “Wilt “thou also destroy the Righteous with the

(g) *Maclaurin's* account of Sir. *I. Newton's* Philosophical Discoveries; p. 383. Neither are they to be commended, says Mr. *Maclaurin*, who, under the Pretence of magnifying the essential power of the supreme Cause, make Truth and Falshood depend on his *Will*. Such tenets have a direct tendency to introduce the absurd Opinion, that intellectual Faculties may be so made; as clearly and distinctly to perceive that to be *true* which is really *false*. *Maclaurin*, p. 379.

(b) Court of the Gentiles, pt. IV. bk. ii. ch. 5. § iii. p. 350.

“Wicked?”

“ Wicked?—That be far from Thee, to do
 “ after this manner; to slay the Righteous with
 “ the Wicked, and that the Righteous should
 “ be as the Wicked; that be far from Thee:
 “ Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do
 “ *Right(b)*?” Our Father here spake what was
 true, and worthy of the supreme God; and
 thereby obtained that glorious Title; which
Plato has also given to the *Religious* man; who
 he saith, is the Friend of God (*i*); in opposition
 to the *Superstitious* Man, who is his *Flatterer*.
 The Christian Religion does not oblige us to
 speak *wickedly* for God, nor to talk *deceitfully*
 for him (*k*); but is equally an enemy to Super-
 stition, as our own: Nor does it suffer us,
 therefore, to exalt his absolute Will and Power
 at the expence of his moral Character; as if it
 depended wholly on his Will, that Virtue is
 preferable to Vice; and not upon its own in-
 trinsic Nature. But it teaches, what is true in
 fact; that Rectitude is unchangeable, indepen-
 dent, and eternal; and no more the subject of
 Power or Will, than necessary Existence—Men
 may flatter Tyrants; by telling them, that
 They can change the nature of Things; and
 make right to be wrong, and wrong to be right,
 at their Command: But, while they think to
 exalt them by such speeches, they in reality

(*b*) *Gen.* xviii. 23, &c. (*i*) *James* ii. 23. (*k*) *Job*
 xiii. 7.

deprive them of every moral Excellence ; and debase them below the common state of Man. For, if Right and Wrong depend on mere Will and Power ; there can be no such thing as Goodness, or Justice, or moral Excellence of any kind, even in God himself : because, if he had acted the very reverse to what he always has done ; (which may very justly be supposed, if it had been in its own Nature equally right :) his Actions, according to *this* notion, would have been equally *just* and *good* and *praiseworthy* ; as they now are. But Christianity does not, by a false Compliment to absolute Power, confess what is not true ; that God would be equally the object of our Adoration, as he now is ; (merely upon account of his absolute Dominion ;) if he were *cruel*, *unjust* and *false* : but, with a rational and manly worship, adores and praises him ; because he chooses to be *merciful*, and *just*, and *true*. But he could not be merciful, nor just, nor true, in annexing Damnation to the vicious Actions of his Creatures ; if Virtue and Vice depended on mere arbitrary Will ; and the Vice which he condemns was in its Nature equally meritorious with the Virtue which he rewards. On the contrary ; it would be the greatest Cruelty, to form Laws of right and wrong ; by which a great number of his Creatures would fall short of Happiness : when, if things were left to themselves to continue as
they

they were, no one could be condemned at all. If, before a Law, Actions were all indifferent; how cruel must it be, to make such a Law as would condemn a great part of the Creation; by calling or declaring one thing to be *good*, and another to be *evil*; one *just* and another *unjust*; when in Truth and Nature there was no Difference, but one thing was as good and as just as the other! As such an arbitrary Determination would be contrary to the Mercy and Justice of God; so would it be also to his Wisdom and Knowledge. To consider one thing to be good, and another to be evil; when he knew them to be *indifferent*, in themselves, and in their consequence; would be contrary to God's Knowledge: and to *declare* them to be so, would be contrary to *Truth*: and to prefer the one to the other, in so extraordinary a manner; if there were no difference in their Natures, upon which to found such preference, would be contrary to *Wisdom*. For arbitrary Will, as it makes no difference or alteration in the things *themselves*, can be no ground or reason of preference to an intelligent Being.

But, in truth; God does not make one thing right and another wrong; one thing morally good, and another thing morally evil; but only *reveals* to us their several Natures: and he does not do this in order to manifest his *Power*, but his *Love*. He deters us from Vice; because, in
its

its very Nature, it is *destructive* to rational and natural Happiness: and he allures us to Righteousness, because it preserves every thing in its proper State, every Being in its proper Rights, and promotes Regularity and Order and Harmony between the separate Interest of the several Individuals through the Universe; and thereby the true Interest and Happiness of the whole.

To explain some other particulars in the method of God's Government, it will be necessary to observe; that the *Happiness* of intelligent Beings is of two Sorts: one of which consists in the *outward* Circumstances, in which they are placed; and the other in the *inward* Satisfaction and Enjoyment of their Consciences; and these two must unite in the same Person, to render his Happiness *complete*. Now the Benefits we receive from God, such as Knowledge and Understanding, and every perfection of Mind and Body; and all the motives to Rectitude and Virtue which we find in the human breast, and the capacity of Improvement in happiness, are innumerable; and are all conferred upon us *δωρεάν*, by the free gift of God, as an all-powerful and benevolent Creator and Benefactor, without any merit of our own. And he confers these blessings upon us; to enable us, by the *right use* of them, to attain to *Virtue* and *Righteousness*; and thereby gain that inward conscious Happiness, which arises *solely* and *entirely* from the approbation

bation of our own Conduct: and is incapable of being derived in any other manner: It must be a man's own Acquisition; or it cannot exist at all. And God, who designs the rational and virtuous part of the creation to enjoy all kind of rational Happiness; hath placed them in such Circumstances as to put this kind of Happiness within their own power; and then, as a moral Governor and Judge, showers down upon them still greater perfection, and higher degrees of good; in reward of their moral Improvement. And thus his Providence is directed to promote both the *natural* and *moral* perfection of his Creatures, wherever it can be done in that way, by bestowing his blessings in a *judicial* manner, as the rewards of Virtue: And from hence it comes to pass; that, though Almighty God is always *willing* to bestow his blessings *as a bountiful Benefactor*, upon his Creatures; yet, *as the Patron of Virtue*, he frequently withholds them; till he can bestow them *judicially*, as the *rewards* of personal Merit, and *encouragements* to Virtue and Righteousness. And for this Reason it seems *that even Christ* himself, our great Exemplar, was not exalted to his great power in an arbitrary manner, as a *free* Gift; but by a *judicial* act of Reward, after he had *merited* it by extraordinary acts of Humiliation and Obedience; whereby the glory of his exaltation received a double Lustre, and doubly served the cause of

Righteousness. This seems also to be the reason, why God commanded *Abimelech* to desire *Abraham* to pray for him; saying, he is a Prophet; and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live^(l). And so again God ordered the Friends of *Job* to offer up a burn'd offering, and "my
" Servant *Job* shall pray for you; for him will I except^(m)." Here it is plain, that God was *willing to forgive*; but would have it done in such a manner, as to promote Virtue and Piety; by accepting the prayers of those, who were holy. And the chief meaning of Sacrifices seems to be of the same Nature; that by such a voluntary Gift to God, Men might make their first advances towards Him, in a public manner; and appear to receive the blessings they prayed for, as a reward of their pious behaviour.

There is an *other* Circumstance in the Administration of Providence, which seems to be a Consequence of this; and is no less worthy our Observation: viz. Though Almighty God is desirous that the distresses of Men should be alleviated; (as appears manifestly, from the commands he has given them to assist and befriend one another;) yet he frequently suffers them to *continue* under their Afflictions, if they be not actually relieved by the benevolence of their *fellow-creatures*: Which seems to shew; that,

(l) Gen. x.

(m) Job xlii. 8.

when God hath enabled Men to assist one another, and given them opportunities of doing it, and a consciousness that it is their Duty; he expects, the whole race of Man should carry-on this purpose; without his immediate interposition. "The divine Scheme, says Mr. *Richard Price*, is plainly this; that Events shall be in a certain degree, what created Agents make them. God's Will, in numberless Cases, appears to be; that one Being shall, or shall not, receive particular Benefits, or suffer particular Evil; as his fellow Beings shall please to determine(*n*)."

And Experience shews this Observation to be just, in a thousand instances. And if, by the good behaviour of any one of the human race, in assisting his fellow-creatures, he can gain *for them*, or *enable them to gain* for themselves, those Rewards, which the moral Governor of the Universe hath appropriated to virtuous actions; and by his Labour or Sufferings in the cause, elicit *moral* Good from *natural* evil; the gain must be immense(*o*). And he that is so wise and benevolent, as to act in this manner; is worthy of the highest Reward and Praise. And as this is a most reasonable Requisition from all Men to one another, as being all fellow-creatures; so it also seems to point-out a Reason, why the Son of God should take our Nature upon him; and

(*n*) *Price* on Providence, p. 97.

(*o*) *Rom.* viii. 18.

why our Salvation should be brought about by one of our own race(*p*).

Having now considered the nature of *Man*, and the Attributes of *God*, and the method of his moral Government over Mankind, as far as is necessary to my present purpose; I will proceed to explain, what seems to be the Scripture Doctrine concerning the *Fall* of Man, and his Recovery from the ill effects of it by a *Mediatorial Redemption*; and clear it from the Additions and Misrepresentations both of the Christians and their Adversaries: that the third *Criterion*, by which the Truth of Christianity is to be examined *a priori*, may be plain and intelligible.

When (*Elohim*) God created the World, and filled it with Animals of every kind, and Food that was proper for them; God said, Let us make *Man* in our Image, after our Likeness(*q*); that is, a moral Governor over the World below them :) and let them have Dominion over the fish of the Sea, and over the fowl of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth. And accordingly God formed Man of the dust of the Ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul(*r*). And the Lord commanded the
Man,

(*p*) *Cor.* xv. 21. *Heb.* ii. 14. &c. (*q*) *Gen.* i. 26.

(*r*) *Ch.* ii. 7. Whatever be the Nature of this Breath of Life, which *we* call the *Soul*; and the Heathens considered in the same Light as *Moses* does, to be *divinae particula auræ*;
and

Man, saying; Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for

and which Sir *Isaac Newton* expresses by the words *Persona Hominis, seu Principium cogitans*; (*Scol. gen.*) it seems, according to St. *Paul*, I Cor. xv. 44. to be neither an *animal* Body, nor a *spiritual* Body; but something different from both. For the Apostle considers animal and spiritual Body to be merely its Vehicles; with the one of which we are now clothed, and with the other we shall be clothed hereafter. And, if the Soul be neither of these; I should conclude, that it is not Body of any kind; but immaterial, impenetrable, destitute of the *Vis Inertiæ*, and all the particular properties of Matter; and a Self-mover.—To confirm this opinion, it may be farther argued; that when *Christ* was to be born into this World, he descended from Heaven; and took upon him, or clothed himself with, the body which was prepared for him in the womb of the Virgin *Mary*; and he consisted of two Principles: The one of which was Flesh, or Body, and material; the other Spirit, which descended from Heaven, and was immaterial. Now if by this he became a *Man*; then Man must also consist of the same two Principles, the one material and the other immaterial; as He did.—On the contrary, if Body and Spirit be the same thing; if *Persona Hominis, seu Principium cogitans* be Body, or Matter; it seems to follow, that the Atoms of *Epicurus* might be endued with Volition, and direct themselves in strait lines, or in curves, or obliquely, or at what Angles they pleased; and form a World, as they should think most proper; without any assistance from without. *Declinare etiam motus, nec tempore certa Nec regione loci certa; sed ubi ipsa tulit Mens*: which is absurd and atheistical, *Lucr. ii. 260.*

in

in the day that thou eatest thereof, *thou shalt surely die(s).*

Various have been the disputes among the Learned; whether this History be literal, or allegorical: but I think, it is not of much concern; with regard to our Conduct in life, and our future Happiness: for the Doctrine conveyed by it, is much the same in either case.

If it was a literal Restriction from one Tree; it inculcated upon our first parents the duty of Sobriety, in making their Appetite obedient to Reason and Religion; and imprinted on their minds a sense of God, as the great Proprietor of all things; and that they had no Right to this Tree, because He had not given it them: and, by parity of reason, this Precept would extend to generals; and then the sense of the words would include their duty to God, their Neighbour, and Themselves; Sobriety, Justice and Piety: if the account be symbolical, it must be intended to signify the same duties under a Figure; and in either sense, it was a command of the utmost Consequence to be complied with: as it gave to Man an opportunity of gaining Immortality, by his Obedience to very easy Conditions. And, indeed the more trifling the light is, in which the Command is represented, by those who object to it on that account; (though most Men sin by the same kind of Temptation, in pre-

(s) Ch. ii. 17.

ferring

ferring their Appetite to their Reason, or the animal to the spiritual Nature;) the more easy must the Condition appear to be, upon which Immortality was offered; and the more heinous the Sin, in disobeying a Divine Command of such infinite Consequence; upon a Temptation (*t*); which they represent to be so slight and trifling.

Thus

(*t*) It is not improbable; that this Prohibition gave the first Rudiments of the *ceremonial*, as well as of the *moral* Law. For when God preserves one Tree as his own Property, whether in a symbolical or literal sense, to shew himself the great Proprietor and Lord of all; nothing could be more natural, than for *Adam* and his Posterity to begin their Worship by an acknowledgement of the same Truth; and upon any extraordinary occasion, (as when they gathered in the fruits of the Earth, or any other time of great joy and thankfulness, and so at length at stated times and seasons) to make a voluntary offering and gift to God of a part of their good things; by way of external confession and symbolical acknowledgment, that he was the great Proprietor from whom they received them; and to offer them in such a manner, that they might be entirely alienated from themselves and from every other man, and thereby appropriated to God; as by burning the Solids in the Fire, or casting them into the Sea; and spilling the Liquids upon the Ground: and so at length different Forms and Ceremonies might arise, appropriated to different Occasions; some, when they offered thanksgiving; others, when they begged forgiveness; others, when they craved blessings, or made confession of their sins: and all these might afterwards be reduced into one regular system; which formed the ceremonial Law given to *Moses*. For all agree;

Thus Man became an intelligent moral agent, capable of Good and Evil, and accountable to his Creator in the Government of himself and the Creatures under his Dominion.

After God of his own grace and favour had given Life to Man; he made the bountiful gift more acceptable, by adding a Certainty of continuing it, as long as Man should continue obedient to the Law of Rectitude, which he had given them: and thus eternal Life depended on their own behaviour.

This appears to be the obvious sense of the Prohibition; “*In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die(u),*” which naturally implies, what

agree; there is no express assertion in the sacred Writings, that this mode of Religious Worship was instituted by God at the beginning: and no other Notion seems with so much probability to account-for its being in use so very early, among the sacred Rites of almost all the Nations of the World; as this does.

(u) *Gen. 17.*—The word *Day* in Scripture language is used sometimes for a very long time. The *Day* of Temptation in the Wilderness was 40 years. *Pf. xcv. 7. Heb. iii. 7.* The Prophets use the Word *Day* for the 70 years Captivity. The *Day* of the great Judgment so much celebrated among the *Jews* in all their Writings, and from them taken-up by *Christ* and his Apostles, contains the whole *Millennium*, or 1000 years. So 1000 years in the sight of God are but as yesterday; *Pf. xc. 4.* and Eternity is called a *Day*, by *St. Peter*; *II. iii. 18.* And thus the Penalty on *Adam* might have been literally fulfilled; for he lived 930 years. Or, the word *Day* may mean
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what all such prohibitions do; that, if the Law was not broken, the Penalty should not be inflicted. This Interpretation is confirmed by the book of *Wisdom*, supposed to be written by our *Philo*; “God made not Death—but ungodly Men with their Works and Words called it to them (x):” and by *Esdras*; who says, unto Him (that is, *Adam*) thou gavest commandment to love thy ways; which He transgressed: and immediately thou appointedst Death in him and in his generations(y). And it is so explained by the Apostles; who tell us, that Death entered into the world by Sin—and Sin brought-forth Death—and the wages of Sin is Death(z): the consequence of which must be, as Dr. *Sykes* observes; that, if there were no Sin, there would be no such Wages paid. And indeed this Law, that those who will not obey the command of their Creator, shall forfeit all the benefit they have received from him, appears so extremely just; that one would rather imagine it to be the general Law of Nature, relative to all moral Beings in the Universe; than any particular Law, which only regarded our first Parents:

an indefinite number of years: or, the words may mean not an actual Death; but a subjection to Death, by withdrawing the particular providence, by which he was preserved. See *Mede*; p. 86, 666.

(x) *Wisd.* i. 13, 16. (y) *II Esd.* iii. 7. (z) *Rom.* v. 12.—*James* i. 15.—*Rom.* vi. 23.

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and that it was not then *newly* constituted, but only then *declared* and announced to Them.

The plain state of the case, according to the Scripture, seems to be this; that, when it pleased God to create a Race of Beings between the Brutes and the Angels; in whom the two Natures should be joined, by the addition of moral Perception to the animal; he gave it into their power either to indulge the *animal* Nature, and forfeit the hope of eternal Life; or, by cultivating the angelic faculties and improving the *moral* character, to become fit and meet to be partakers of Immortality; and admitted into the rank of Angels. For this seems to be the sense of St. *Paul*; in several parts of his writings: He tells us, “He that soweth to his *Flesh*, (that is, He that labours to indulge the *animal* part of his Nature) shall of the flesh reap Corruption; but He that soweth to the *Spirit*, (that is, He that labours to benefit the intelligent, *moral*, or angelic part of his Nature) shall of the *spirit* reap life everlasting(*a*). So again; if ye live after the *flesh*, ye shall *die*; but if ye through the *spirit* do mortify the deeds of the *body*, ye shall *live*(*b*). And accordingly, the Christian Scriptures assure us; that *Christ* has given us power, to become the *sons of God* (*c*); to quit entirely the animal Nature, and become

(*a*) Gal. vi. 8.

(*b*) Ro. iii. 13.

(*c*) Luke xx. 36.

equal to the Angels, the Children of the Resurrection; who can die no more(*d*). And St. *Peter* expresses this whole Doctrine; telling us, that exceeding great and precious promises were given to us; “that we might be partakers of the divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the world through lust(*e*).”

I do not see, it is at all necessary here to enter into the Question; whether Man was created immortal, and Sin produced Mortality; and *Christ* restores that Immortality, which *Adam* lost: or whether *Adam* was created mortal; and *Christ* confers upon us an Immortality, which *Adam* failed of gaining by not performing the Conditions upon which it was offered him.—It is sufficient for the Explanation of the *Christian* scheme, to observe; that God promised Life to *Adam*, upon his Obedience: and consequently, whether he was at first naturally mortal or not, he could not cease to live, while he continued obedient; and on the other hand, whether he was naturally immortal or not, he would certainly die, if he was disobedient; and in either case, it may be said, that Death entered into the world by Sin, and that by Man came Death; whether it was a positive infliction of Punishment, or merely the consequence of withdrawing the particular Providence by which he was preserved.

(*d*) *John* i. 12.

(*e*) *II Pet.* i. 4.

However, it is certain; that the Scriptures never give us the least hint of *Adam's* natural Immortality: but through the whole History consider his Existence to be dependent on the Tree of Life. For, when *Adam* was driven out of Paradise, we are told; that Angels were placed at the East of the garden of *Eden*, to keep the way of the tree of Life; least he should put forth his hand, and eat, and live for ever(*f*). From whence it appears in a literal sense; that, though Immortality was within his reach; yet he was not then possessed of it. And the same Idea is continued in the Revelation of St. *John*; where we are told, that the leaves of the Tree of Life were for the healing of the Nations (*g*):" which notion of it answers in the literal sense to a continued Providence in successive subministration of help and assistance and remedy against all misfortunes and accidents. And this Interpretation is confirmed by two similar Instances in the Scripture; one in the *Old*, and the other in the *New* Testament: the first is in the History of *Hezekiah*(*b*), whose state was in this particular, for some years, the same as *Adam's* seems to have been. It was declared to him by God; that he would add unto his days Fifteen years: And a similar instance we meet in the new Testament; where it was revealed to *Simeon*(*i*), by

(*f*) *Gen.* viii. 2, 24.

(*g*) *Rev.* xxii. 2.

(*b*) *II Kings* xx. 6.

(*i*) *Luke* ii. 26.

the Holy Ghost; that he should not see Death, before he had seen the Lord's *Christ*. Now the Lives of these were as sure and certain, till the time appointed by the promise of God, as if they had been naturally immortal: and yet not by any alteration in the metaphysical nature of the Soul, but by a *particular Providence*. For, whenever God determines *absolutely* the End, he himself will provide the Means to bring it about.

With regard to the Nature of the *Death*, which was here threatened; some Christians have fallen into very erroneous notions: and thereby given great advantages to their adversaries.

Some have imagined; that by *Death* is meant eternal Life in Misery: But that is only a metaphorical Death; and there is no reason, from the words of the Scripture, to believe any other Death was mean'd than a literal one. *Adam* was made of the dust of the ground; and God breathed into him the breath of Life: and by Death that Life was lost, and his Body returned to dust again, and his Spirit to God who gave it(k). So that we have no right to understand it of any other Penalty, than the loss of that Life which he had newly received. It was the same *Death*, which the Apostle says passed upon all

(k) *Eccles. xii. 7.*

men (*l*); and is opposed to the Resurrection to Life in *Christ* (*m*): and every other sense of the word is forced and unnatural; and such as it cannot be supposed that *Adam* had any Idea of: and the History explains it in this Sense, when it recounts the infliction of the Penalty; and all the days that *Adam* lived were 930 years, and he died (*n*): for who can believe, that the Death he underwent was any other than the same that was threatened?

Others think, by *Death* was mean'd eternal Death; or a Death that would never end: but this is inconsistent with the hopes of a Resurrection to Life, which we all believe; both *Jews* and *Christians*: and besides, we have no Right to extend the Penalty beyond what the words themselves require. As this was a solemn Covenant between God and Man, in which the Terms to be observed were explicit on the *one* hand; there can be no reason to suspect, that there could be any thing intended in the Penalty, but what was precisely specified on the *other* hand. And as there is no mention there made of *eternal* Death; nor hint of any other sense of the word *Death*, than what we find in other parts of the *Mosaic* Writings; we have no reason to understand it any otherwise, than as it is denounced against the infraction of the *Mosaic*

(*l*) *Rom.* v. 12.(*m*) *Cor.* xv.(*r*) *Gen.* v. 5.

Law;

Law; and in the same sense, in which all Nations understand it, when they make it the Penalty of capital Crimes. And thus it was understood, by our ancient Commentators; who assert the Serpent to have been *Samael*, the angel of Death: and R. *Menahem* on *Levit. xxv.* from the Cabalists, tells us; “all the Souls, who are created and become unclean by the filthiness, which the Serpent brought upon *Eve*; must needs die, before the Coming of the *Messiah*, &c. and, at the Coming of the *Messiah*, all Souls shall be consummated thenceforth.” So then the belief of our ancient Rabbins was; that the Life, which was lost by *Adam*, was again to be restored; and, consequently, the Death threatened was only to be for a time.

But, though *Adam* suffered the Penalty denounced; we have no reason to consider *this*, as his *final* Judgment; for, notwithstanding this Transgression, he might have spent the remaining years of his Life in a very virtuous and pious manner. And there are other instances in Scripture, of Men, who have been punished with Death for a single Transgression, who without doubt, when the whole of their conduct is examined into at the last day, will be found well-pleasing to God; and fit to be partakers of eternal Life.* And in truth, this was the case of *our* great Lawgiver himself; who was debarred from going into the holy Land, and ordered to
die

die in Mount *Nebo*, because of his transgression in *Meribah Kadesh*, in the wilderness of *Zin(o)*. And therefore, though Death may be a proper Penalty upon some single act (*p*); yet it is not therefore to be looked-upon as a just and adequate Judgement upon a Man's whole Conduct in Life; which will be all considered by a righteous and impartial Judge, before he can possibly pass Sentence upon him; according to his real Merit and personal Character. But every one, who shall be found at the last day to have acted with such Piety and Sincerity, as shall be well pleasing to God; (notwithstanding those accidental failings, which no man is always sufficiently guarded against;) shall, according to the Christian Scripture, be considered as the proper Objects of his Favour.

It is probable; that, before *Adam* had receiv'd from God any intimation, that his race was to be continued; he knew not, but he should immediately die: much less could he know, at that time, that he should ever be raised again from the dead. For as, on the *one* hand, there was no principle of Justice or Equity, which *required* that God should continue him always in a state of Death, which he had *never threatened*; so, on the *other* hand, there was no principle of Justice or Equity, that made it *necessary* to raise him

(o) *Deut.* xxxiv. 1. xxxii. 51.

(p) *Num.* xv. 32, &c.

again

again to that Life, which he had forfeited by his Disobedience. God had therefore an absolute Power and Right, free from any obligation of Promise or Threat, to do as he pleased; without any impeachment of his Justice or Mercy.—But, when it afterwards appeared to *Adam*, that God designed to continue his race; and they were to live in a state, where Death was not pronounced against every Sin; but the good and bad were to pass their lives together in the same Society; it was very natural for him to conclude, that God design'd a future state of Existence for the Righteous, after this Life should be ended: or else he would not continue a World, where Vice and Virtue have such equal Consequences; that “one thing happens to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not(*q*).” This Conclusion the new Testament allows us to make; when it is said of the Patriarchs, “but now they desire a *better* Country; that is, a *heavenly*; wherefore God is not ashamed, to be called their God: (or rather, God doth not make them ashamed, in being called their God:) for he hath prepared for them a City(*r*).” That is to say, in other Words; God would not have placed good men in *this* World, to go through the fatigues and troubles and disasters of it, if he had not designed them for a *better*. And there-

(*q*) *Eccles.* ix. 2.

(*r*) *Heb.* xi. 16. see Dr. Sykes.

fore it is a very wrong Conclusion, which some Christians make; that, if there had been no *Redemption*, all Mankind would have been *damned*: for it seems a much more rational Conclusion, that the race of Men would *not have been continued*. A Writer in the Unitarian Tracts says; “If God had not resolved to redeem Mankind, he would have plunged *Adam* and *Eve* into the pit of Hell; immediately after their Sin: and would not have suffered them to propagate a wretched Progeny, who were under a Necessity of Sinning. But seeing God preserved the World, and bare with Men; it was an infallible sign he would assist them, as far as was necessary, to recover the Liberty of the sons of God; which is confirmed by the Apostle *Paul*(*r*).

There are many, who, in order to account-for the present weakness and wickedness of Mankind, imagine; that, upon the Fall of *Adam*, the human Faculties were depraved; either naturally, by some taint derived from Him; or by some act of God. But the Scriptures say no such thing; and we want no such Hypothesis, to account-for them: because the very same Reason or Cause, be it what it will, which accounts-for the Sin of the *first* Man, who came pure out of the hands of the Creator; will account-for the Sins of *all* Men ever since: and

(*r*) Unit. Tracts, Vol. iv. Tr. x. *Rom.* ii. 4, 14, 15.

to suppose that God would deprave the Will, or weaken the Understanding of Men, merely as a Punishment for what they could not help; is a most unworthy imputation upon the divine *Goodness*: and it is no less so upon his *Wisdom*; as if he were capable of contradiction and inconsistency. For, if He designed to give them eternal Life; why did he make them less capable of gaining it (*s*)? and, if he did not design it; why did he send them a Saviour? This notion was first invented, to shew the certainty of eternal Damnation to all the posterity of *Adam*, if *Christ* had not died; for as much as by this Taint or Corruption of Nature it was rendered impossible for them to do things well pleasing to God. But this Argument proves *too much*; and therefore concludes *nothing*. For, the less *capable* a Man is of Perfection, the less will be *required* of him: And, if it were impossible for him to do things well pleasing to God; it would cease to be his Duty.

(*s*) See *Phoenix*, vol. ii. p. 338. They make *God* like *Tiberius*; who, as *Tacitus* reports in the V of his annals, commanded the hangman to execute *Sejanus's* Daughter, though innocent and a Virgin; when, notwithstanding, it was unheard-of, that such a one should suffer tyrannical punishment.—Wherefore, that he might have some pretence, he commanded the hangman, first to deflower the Virgin, and then to kill her. In the same manner they blasphemously make *God* dealing with men.

Upon this mistake the generality of Christians have built another, equally inconsistent with their own Scriptures ; that upon account of this depravation of the Will and natural Powers of Man at the Fall, a *Mediator* was *at first* introduced ; as a kind of *Supplement* to the Original Scheme, which was interrupted by *Adam's* Sin. But this is not true. For it was the *Original* design of God, before the foundation of the World, to bring Mankind to Happiness ; by the *same* Person, whom he has since constituted a Prince and a Saviour ; having appointed him from the beginning, according to the different circumstances of the World, and under the different Characters of the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, and the *Messiah*, to minister to the Will of the Father in all things relative to the Salvation of Man ; and to do every thing that was necessary according to his Will, *pro re natâ*, to bring down upon them those Blessings, for which they were created and designed.

Some of the Christians maintain, contrary to the first Principles of Christianity and even natural Religion, that the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin descended upon his Posterity, and also the *Punishment*. But this is impossible ; from the nature of Justice. For Justice requires, that the Punishment shall not be extended beyond the Guilt ; and Guilt is merely *personal*, and inseparable from the agent who contracted it ; for no one
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can be guilty of a fault, properly speaking; but He that committed it. It cannot therefore descend from one Person to another. And, if the Guilt cannot descend, neither can the Punishment; for, if the Punishment were to descend without the Guilt, it would fall upon the Innocent: but this it will not do, because God is just; and Justice requires (as above) that Punishment shall not extend beyond Guilt. Now it is impossible that the Posterity of *Adam* should have been concerned at all in his Guilt, or even privy to it; because they were not in being, when the Guilt was contracted: and consequently if God is just, they are not accountable for it. “How many volumes, says Bp. *Taylor*, have been writ about Angels, about Immaculate Conception, about Original Sin; when all that is solid Reason or clear Revelation in all these three articles, may be reasonably enough comprized in forty lines (t)!”

To confirm this Error, some argue from the Words of St. *Paul*; that, if *in Adam all died*, then Death was the Punishment inflicted upon his Posterity for his Sin. To which it is very justly answered; that Death was the *Consequence* of his Sin; but it was not a *Punishment* of it: and these are very different things; notwithstanding the Suffering may be the same. But

(t) Liberty of Proph. Ded. 44.

let us examine what Mr. *Chubb* has advanced upon the Subject. "The Evils, says he, are
 "just the same; whether they are considered as
 "a Punishment for *Adam's* Sin, or only a natu-
 "ral *Consequence* thereof. They are equally the
 "same, in themselves; and equally the same,
 "as to *those who bear them*: and, he imagines,
 "the Character and Conduct of the Deity are
 "equally affected by it." And again; "if these
 "Evils are considered as Afflictions laid upon
 "our Species, on account of *Adam's* Sin; this
 "is not to be admitted: but then conjure them
 "into a Consequence of *Adam's* Transgression,
 "and all is right(*u*)."

To which it may be answered, as follows. That Death is the *same* identical Suffering, in both Cases; as supposed in the question: but it was neither the same thing, as to the *conduct* of the Deity, whether it was merely a Suffering or a Punishment; nor the the same thing, as to the *Sufferer*. As to the Conduct of the Deity, it is intirely consistent with his Justice to afflict an innocent Person; in order by that means to promote his Happiness: or to place different Men in different Circumstances, with regard to their happiness in this Life; and to give eternal Life to whom he pleases: but it is utterly *incon-*
sistent with Justice; to afflict an innocent Per-

(*u*) *Chubb* on Redemption, p. 78.

son, by way of *Punishment*; for this plain reason, because he is *innocent*. And as to the Sufferer; the same Suffering will be very different to him, according to the light in which he views it. If a Man should be condemned to lose a Limb, as a *Punishment*; it would be a very different thing to him, from suffering an Amputation to *preserve Life*; though the Pain would be the same. Or, if a prince should order an Officer upon a dangerous Attack; it would be a very different thing from his ordering him to undergo the same risque of Life, as a *Punishment*. In short, no wise and brave Man would refuse to suffer; if the consequential Advantages in view would make it worth his while: and none but a Fool would suffer a voluntary Evil, without some Advantage in view; either to Himself or Others. This is so plain, that even a Child can distinguish between them: and will voluntarily suffer, *with a Reward in view*, the same pain; which he would never suffer voluntarily, as a *punishment*.

It may be farther urged; that Death was not a Punishment to the Posterity of *Adam*, because they were deprived of no Right; for, had the death of *Adam* been immediately inflicted, they would never have existed; and, if they had no right to Existence, they could have none to the Continuance of it. Whatever Portion of Life they received, was the *free Gift* of the Creator; and therefore it could not be a Punishment, that
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it was not of longer continuance. The Loss of Life would have been no Punishment, to *Adam himself*; if it had not been inflicted upon him *judicially*, as the Penalty of Sin, but it had pleased God to have created him for an existence of 930 years, and he had then died without any condemnation: and it can with no more reason be called a Punishment upon his Posterity; that their Lives shall not be extended in this World, beyond the natural Dissolution of the Body. In short, they are in the Condition of a Person, to whom the Lease of an Estate is given freely, and of mere bounty, for a few years; Who, instead of being thankful for it, complains of it as an Injury, or at least as a Hardship upon him; because it was not given him for a longer Term.

But the most material Consideration, which ought abundantly to satisfy us in our present State, and prevent all Complaint that we are not created under the same Conditions as our first Parent, is this; that it would have been of no Use and Benefit to us: because we should all of us, by some Sin or other, have forfeited Life, as he did; and stood in need of a Redemption from Death, as we *now do*: for, that we have all sinned, will require no proof. So that, instead of complaining of Death as an Evil, we should consider it as the wise and merciful appointment of God upon the Introduction of Sin; in order to *prevent* a thousand Evils in *this* world, which
we

we should otherwise be subjected to; and admonish us to prepare for a more lasting and valuable home in a *better*. And, if Death serves to such excellent uses, it is our best Friend(x).

Upon the Whole; there is nothing, in the Scripture account of the Fall of Man; and the present State of his Posterity, in consequence of it; which, when properly considered, appears in any respect inconsistent with the divine Attributes; or the Nature of Man. And it would be so far from any benefit to *us*, to have the promise of eternal Life, upon the *same* Condition as *he* had; that we are in a much *safer* and *better* state as we are: as I shall shew in its proper place. And, after all the Objections that have been made to this History, there never was one good Reason given; why God, when he created Man, should not first suffer him to try his own strength; with the great prize of eternal life in view, to encourage his best endeavours: before he should vouchsafe to give it him in any other way. Nor can it be shewn, that there ever was any bad consequence from this trial; much less any Curse upon *Adam* or his Posterity: But quite the Reverse.—When it appeared in the Event, that Man had not gained eternal Life, by a perfect Obedience to the Law which God had given him, according to Conditions stipu-

(x) See Essay on the beauty of the Divine Œconomy, by *H. Taylor*: page 14.

lated; God, of his own Grace and Bounty, offered it as a free Gift to all his Posterity; who manifest, by their love and regard to his commands, and their benevolence to their fellow-creatures, that they are fit to be trusted in such a state; and are meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light(y).

We see then, that *Adam* was condemned by a Law; which was mercifully designed to give him an opportunity of gaining eternal Life, in reward of his own good behaviour; without the mediation of any other Being.

But, what was mean'd to give Life and Happiness, was, through his own fault, the cause of Guilt and Death; and this Death, by the rigorous nature of Law, would have been without Redemption; had not the Goodness and Mercy of the Lawgiver interposed, to restore him again to Life. *Leges enim rem surdam, inexorabilem, nihil laxamenti nec veniæ habere: periculosum esse in tot humanis erroribus solâ innocentia vivere.*—But though the Law condemns, without mercy or relaxation; it does not prevent the mercy and benevolence of the Lawgiver: *esse gratiæ locum, esse beneficio: inter amicum & inimicum (Regem) discrimen nosse(z).* These words of the *Roman* Historian extremely well express the unavoidable Condemnation of our

(y) *Gal.* i. 12.

(z) *Livii Hist.* L. i.

first Parent; and the grounds of his future Hopes, after the Sentence pass'd; agreeably to the Words of *Hosea*: O *Israel*, thy *Destruction* is of *thy self*; but in *me* is thy *Hope*(a).

How the Redemption from this state of Death was to be brought about; is a matter of great dispute. However, it is certain; that it could not be in any way contrary to the nature of Man; or the Divine attributes of Justice and Goodness. And therefore, all such Doctrines, as explain it in a sense inconsistent with these, though maintain'd by Men of the highest Character, must be rejected; if we would defend Christianity upon the principle of Truth.—The method of it consistent with Scripture and Reason shall be proved hereafter: at present I shall only prepare the way to it; by shewing, in what manner it has pleased God to act in similar Circumstances; and obviating some Objections, which arise from the mistaken notion of it.

If we look into the fourteenth chapter of the book of *Numbers*, and the ninth of *Deuteronomy*; we shall find the whole Nation of the *Israelites* twice under the same Circumstances with *Adam* at the time of his Condemnation. Once, when they made the molten image in *Horeb*; and afterwards, when they were going to stone *Caleb* and *Joshua*, within sight of the Holy Land: at both

(a) *Hos.* xiii. 9.

which times the Nation was so far condemned by God, that he declared to *Moses*; "Let me alone, that I may destroy Them and blot out their name from under Heaven; and I will smite them with Pestilence, and disinherit them; and I will make of Thee a nation mightier and greater than they." In like manner, had it pleased God to put an End to the Race of *Adam*; he might have raised up from the dust *another* Race of Men, to inherit the Blessings which were *originally* designed for *Him* and his *Posterity*.

But this offer our great Lawgiver, with a truly noble and generous Spirit, magnanimously refused: (Let any other Nation in the world produce such an instance of disinterested Patriotism!) and upon prayer to God, that he would remember his Servants *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and suggesting that the People were his *own* people, and his *own* inheritance; which he had delivered from *Egypt*, by his mighty Power; and whose Iniquities he had pardoned ever since, by his great Mercy and Goodness: (All which an unmerciful Being would have looked-upon as aggravations of their Crime, rather than pleas for Pardon:) the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy Word; but, as truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord; because all those Men, who have seen my Glory and my Miracles, which I did in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderness; and have
tempted

tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my Voice; surely they shall not see the land, which I swear unto their Fathers: neither shall any of them which provoked me see it." Here we may observe; that, though the Nation deserved Death, and God actually threatened it; yet he forgave them, upon the Intercession of *Moses*: though the Arguments *Moses* used were only directed to the divine Attributes of Mercy and Love, by which he had so long preserved and saved them. And, agreeably to what we see here, and many other instances in the Scripture, God is represented as rewarding Virtue and Righteousness in the highest manner that a benevolent and generous Man could wish for; and in a way most proper to encourage it; by granting, in answer to the *Prayer* and *Intercession* of a righteous though imperfect Man, and in *reward of his righteousness*, the power of obtaining Blessings, (not improper to be pray'd for) upon his Friends and Country; and becoming a Benefactor to Mankind.

From hence I argue; that a way might possibly be open for the Mercy and Goodness of God to recover and redeem our first Parents from Death to which they had been devoted. If God would have saved *Sodom*, for the sake of *ten* righteous persons (*b*); If he remembered

(*b*) *Gen.* xviii. 32.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so as to be merciful to their Posterity for their *sakes* (c); If he would not rend the Kingdom of *Israel* from *Solomon*, for his Father *David's* sake (d); If he defended *Jerusalem* against the *Affyrians*, for his *own* sake and for his Servant *David's* sake (e); If God not only forgave *Abimelech*, upon the prayer of *Abraham* (f); and the friends of *Job*, upon the prayer of *Job* (g): but directed the delinquents to seek forgiveness by *their* Mediation; promising that he would accept their prayers: In short, if we find that God is always represented in the Scripture as *ready to forgive*; and as *taking occasion* of being kind and merciful to his Creatures, upon every act of Penitence and Righteousness; and *ready* to shower down his Mercies upon them, even before such an opportunity appears; whenever it is consistent with his *Wisdom*; and the *end* and *design* of his moral *Government*: if all these things be considered seriously; there can be no reason to imagine him *less ready* to manifest the same Goodness and Mercy, by restoring Life to our first Parent; and bringing all his posterity, who should be fit for such a State, to that Immortality; for which the race of Man was originally designed: and this not only for his own *Mercy's sake*, but for the sake of that *beloved Being*, by whom he made us; and

(c) *Gen.* xxvi. 24. (d) *I Kings* xi. 12. (e) *II Kings* xix. 34.
 (f) *Gen.* xx. 7. (g) *Job* xlii. 8.
 whose

whose Subjects we are designed to be, in the Kingdom which he has gained for us by his Righteousness; and who hath alway, from the beginning of the World, sometimes in the Character of the Angel of *Jehovah*, under which Title he revealed himself in the Bush; but more especially by his Death and Sufferings in the Character of the *Messiah*, manifested the most affectionate Love and Regard to the whole race of Man.

But though these Principles are plain and intelligible, and agreeable to the Doctrines of the old Testament; and the Christian Religion is founded upon this undeniable Truth, that the supreme Lord and Governor of the Universe has a Power, consistent with all his divine Attributes to forgive fit objects of Mercy; and to confer free Grace and Bounty undeserved, whenever it is agreeable to his Wisdom: yet this plain Doctrine has been so amazingly obscured and borne down among the defenders of Christianity, by the Metaphysical and Scholastical opinions which have for a long time prevailed; that, in apologizing for the Christian Faith, I find myself not only obliged to oppose the Arguments of the *Jews* and *Deists*; but some of the most respectable Characters in the *Christian* Church: who have endeavoured to explain the Christian Scheme upon Principles, which may be proved
to

to be *false*; or inconsistent with Principles and Doctrines, which may be proved to be *true*.

Grotius, *Stillingfleet*, and other learned Men, have defended the two following propositions, as the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity; both which are contrary to the old Testament, and absolutely *false*. First, they assert; that “there is a *Necessity* of God’s vindicating his *Honour* to the World, upon the breach of his Laws; if not by the suffering of the Offenders themselves, yet by the suffering of the Son of God, as a sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin; by undergoing the punishment of *our* Iniquities(*b*):” which appears to me to be the same thing as to assert, that God is not able to forgive Sins, *δωρεάν* freely.

Secondly; that a person, notwithstanding his Innocency, may oblige himself, by an act of his own Will, to undergo that Punishment which *otherwise* he did not deserve: which Punishment in that case will be *just* and agreeable to Reason(*i*).” At present I shall only consider the first of these Assertions; leaving the other to be canvassed in the seventh Letter.

Now of all the religious Notions I ever met with, none ever appeared to me more contradictory to the Scriptures; or to the natural Notions which sensible Men of all Religions

(*b*) *Stillingfleet* on the Sufferings of *Christ*, p. 287.

(*i*) *Ibid.* p. 303.

have entertained of the Power and Mercy and Justice of the supreme Being, than these. Shall we dare to assert, that a just and a good God actually *punishes* the *Innocent*; and yet is not able without, not only the *consent*, but the *actual sufferings* of another Person, to *forgive* the *Penitent*? Can forgiving a *Penitent* be less agreeable to Rectitude, than punishing the *Innocent*? Will they ever persuade a *Mahometan* to receive such an unworthy notion of the divine Attributes; or think to convert a *Jew* to such Doctrines, as he can prove to be false from the Law and the Prophets? Yet we are confidently told, with great Zeal for the honour of God, by these most learned and respectable Divines, that God has *no such Power*; except the Son of God shall suffer as a Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin, by undergoing the Punishment of our Iniquities. For there is a *necessity* of God's vindicating his Honour to the World, upon the breach of his Laws; says Bp. *Stillingfleet*.

The learned *Theophilus Gale* goes still farther; and says, “ we are not to consider, what God
 “ can do of his *absolute* Justice or Dominion;
 “ for by this he may let Sin pass unpunished:
 “ but we must consider, what by his *ordinate*
 “ Justice and moral Constitution he can do.
 “ And in this regard it is most true, that God is
 “ under a *Necessity* of punishing Sin, without a

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“ Satis-

“ Satisfaction ; and he were inevitably *unjust*,
 “ if he did not punish it(*k*).”

Dr. *Clarke* was not quite so peremptory and confident. This great Man knew ; that Christ is never said, in the New Testament, to be *punished* ; though he is so often said to have *suffered* for us : and therefore does not venture to use that unwarrantable Word, expressly ; but varies the Phrase and softens the Doctrine, to make it less liable to exception. *He* tells us ;
 “ when the Honour of God’s Laws had been diminished by Sin ; it was *reasonable* and *necessary*, (notwithstanding God’s Power and absolute Right of forgiving ; yet in respect of his Wisdom in governing the World, it was reasonable and necessary), there should be a *Vindication* of the authority of his Laws ; and therefore, in that sense of Necessity it was *necessary*, either that the Sinner should perish ; or some other Satisfaction should be made in his stead (*l*) :” which amounts to an assertion ; that punishment of Sin is *always* necessary, in the Government of the World. But this is not true : for it may, for aught we know, be more agreeable in many instances to the *Wisdom* of God in his governing the World, to *forgive* ; than to *punish* : and in all such Instances, Punishment *will* not be *necessary*.

(*k*) Court of the *Gentiles*, part iv. p. 369.

(*l*) Sermons, Vol. viii. p. 373. Of the Nature of the Sufferings of *Christ*, Sermon. 137. p. 142. vol. ii. fol. ed.

From whence, then, does this new invented Necessity arise; which limits and restrains the absolute Right and free Mercies of God? Is it a doctrine of Scripture? by no means: the Old and New Testament are ignorant of it. Hear what *Isaiab* says; “I even I am he, saith the Lord; that blotteth out thy Transgressions, for *mine own sake*; and will not remember thy Sins (*m*): and again; Is my hand shortened at all, that I cannot redeem? and have I no power to deliver (*n*)? And the new Testament declares, that God forgives us freely; *δωρεάν* and there is not one Text, in either of Them, that speaks of the Sufferings of *Christ* as a *Punishment*; or one that says, they were intended to vindicate the Authority of God’s Laws; much less mentions the necessity of *such a Vindication*, and that God *could not* forgive Sins *without* it. This is all human invention. Dr. *Sykes* says, very truly; “when I look over every passage, that mentions the Effect of *Christ*’s death, or what he did, or why he suffer’d; I do not find the *Authority of God’s Laws* mentioned among them. And can that be supposed an End of the Sufferings of *Christ*, which is not once mentioned to us; at the same time that we are immediately and directly concerned in it; and perhaps we only (*o*)?

But Dr. *Clarke* tells us, this Vindication is reasonable and necessary; notwithstanding God’s

(*m*) *Is.* xliii. 25. (*n*) *Is.* l. 2. (*o*) *Sykes’ Script.*
Doct. p. 352.

Power and absolute Right to forgive. Here we see, how this great man was embarrassed: for he tells us, in another place—"the Justice of God may seem to be most highly magnified; by supposing that it puts an *absolute Necessity* upon him; either of inflicting an *infinite Punishment*, or of demanding an *infinite Satisfaction*. But they, who so speak, ought at the same time to consider on the other hand; that they leave no room either for Goodness or Mercy(*p*)."—Now, if this Observation be *true*, as it certainly is; the necessity of vindicating his Laws must be *false*: for the two propositions are absolutely *inconsistent*. In short; "if the Sinner repents, there can be no *necessity* of Punishment; for the *End* is obtained, without it; and there is nothing in Punishment, save as a *Mean*, in which Goodness can take Content(*q*).—" But let us inquire into the Nature of this supposed Necessity. Does it controul his Attributes, both natural and moral? Is it superior to God himself? Is any human Lawgiver so restrained; that he cannot, upon the proper submission and behaviour of the Offender, forgive the transgression of his own Laws? And is it not a perfection in God's Prerogative, to commiserate every compassionate Case; and temper and abate the severity of the Law? Is not this what we mean by

(*p*) Clarke's Serm. Vol. I. p. 166. fol. Vol. II. p. 214. 8vo. (*q*) Whichcote's Aphorisms, N. 268.

Mercy?

Mercy? and if the necessity of vindicating his laws, deprives him of this Power; can he be said to be merciful, in *any* Sense? And are we sure; that God is unable to forgive the sins of imperfect Creatures, in every *other* part of the Universe; as well as in this puny Orb, which we inhabit; unless the Son of God, or some other Person, “whose Innocence and Dignity might make his Sufferings worthy to be accepted of God instead of the Punishment due to the Offender,” should be punished in every *other* world as well as *this*? If God can forgive the Sins of his Creatures freely, in any *other* part of the Universe; he may possibly be able to do it *here*: for what should restrain him?

The *Jews* in the days of *Christ* were well persuaded from the Scriptures; that God alone *could* forgive Sins: but the modern Christians have found-out, that this is a mistake: and God alone *cannot* do it. But, while the Right and Power of God to forgive is allowed on all sides to be *absolute*, to be founded upon the divine Nature; it must follow unavoidably, that the necessity of Punishing, which is contrary to this right, *cannot be absolute*; but must depend upon the divine Will: and consequently, may be executed or not; as shall be most agreeable to the divine Wisdom. And Mr. *Gale* himself says the same thing in other words; “If God’s
“punishing Sin was from a Necessity of *Nature*,
“and

“ and not from the free Constitution of his *Will*;
 “ he must punish Sin as necessarily, as he loves
 “ Himself: and then it will follow; that God
 “ cannot relaxate his penal Laws, as to the
 “ Time, Measure and Manner of punishing;
 “ yea, he cannot accept of the Satisfaction of a
 “ Mediator: for that is a degree of Relax-
 “ ation(r).”

Now if this Necessity is neither to be found in the Scripture, nor in the Nature of things; there can be no such thing. Mr. *Gale* calls it a *moral* Obligation God is under to the Vindication of his Justice, as Ruler of the World; this, he says, some call a *natural Congruence* or *Condescency*; which *obliges* God to vindicate his own Justice: and Dr. *Clarke* says, it was necessary; in respect of God’s governing the World.

If this be all that is mean’d by it; it might be much more intelligibly expressed, by saying; that God in his infinite Wisdom sees, that Punishment is necessary to carry-on the Government of the World: and this may *in general* be true. And so Magistrates also see, that Punishment is necessary to carry-on the government of Societies.—But does it follow from hence, that the Magistrate is under a *necessity* to punish; and that it would be *unjust* in him to forgive? May it not be most wise for the Magistrate on

(r) Court of the *Gentiles*, part iv. p. 369.

some occasions to offer forgiveness to a delinquent; if he will return to his Duty, if he will discover his Accomplices, &c.? or more agreeable to the wisdom of God, to forgive and reform a Penitent; rather than destroy him (*s*)? God himself declares; that he is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, and forgiving Iniquity and Trespases and Sin(*t*). And is all this contrary to his Wisdom, in governing the World? or is there no meaning to these Words? or is it possible, that God should so describe his own Nature; if his forgiveness depended upon the voluntary Sufferings of another Person? It remains therefore with the defenders of those great Men, to prove; that forgiveness *δωρεάν* is *always* inconsistent with the

(*s*) Mere *Power* is sufficient to *destroy*; without Wisdom or any moral Perfection: but *Goodness* and *Wisdom* are necessary to *reform* and *save*. No created Being can be so foolish and wicked; but that the wisdom of his Creator may place him in such Circumstances, if he pleases so to do; as will teach him by experience the impotency of his Folly and Wickedness, and affect him with such a sense of the divine Power and Perfection, as must in time induce him to reform his Conduct; consistently with the freedom of his Will. But what length of time may be necessary, to produce a reformation in his principles and actions; and what distress and anguish of mind may be gone-through, before such a change can be made in rough and stubborn Tempers, is terrible to conceive.

(*t*) *Ex.* xxxiv. 6, 7.

Wisdom

Wisdom of God in the government of the World. And if they were able to prove it, (which is impossible, because God is merciful :) they would destroy the fundamental principle of *Christianity*.

On the other side, it may with great Truth and Certainty be argued ; that the Laws of God were not given, for their own sakes ; but for the sake of *promoting Righteousness* : and consequently, when Righteousness can at any time be more effectually promoted by Forgiveness, than by Punishment ; there can be no necessity to vindicate his Laws : it would be prejudicial to the cause of Virtue and Righteousness, which are the great ends and objects of the divine Government ; and we may be certain, that the Almighty *Jehovah* will never forget or neglect, no not for a moment, the great end for which all his Laws are enacted : but if, by an act of well-timed Mercy, he can affect the nobler passions of Love and Gratitude ; and bring us to the practice of Virtue, by gentle means, agreeable to our intelligent natures ; (of which we find many instances in Scripture, where God mollifies the heart by Benefits ; and brings forth Repentance and Amendment from Shame and Gratitude and Love :) God himself, as the moral Governor of the Universe, will *forbid* the vindication of his Laws, as *prejudicial* to his own designs ; and a mere useless or rather mischievous piece of Formality.

mality. And in truth, there never can be a *necessity* for God to punish; but when it is most *wise* to do so, of which only he is the Judge.

Mr. *Theophilus Gale* says; this Controversy was on foot many hundred years since. For *Au'stine* held, that God could save Sinners without a Satisfaction; and *Anselme* held, that he could not. And *Bradwardine*, by the distinction of God's *absolute* and *ordinate* Power, as Rector of the World, undertakes to reconcile them. In the *former* sense of an absolute Power, he *can*; and in the *latter* sense, as Rector of the World, he *cannot* save Sinners; but by *Christ(u)*. But the Question is; by which of these ways *will* God act? If he *can* act either by his absolute or ordinate power, as he pleases; where is the *necessity* to *punish*? and, if he *cannot*, where is his *absolute* Power? To have an absolute Power to forgive, and be at the same time under a Necessity to punish; is a contradiction.—The Sophistry, or at least the Confusion here, arises from using the word *Necessity* in two different senses: sometimes, as it relates to the *natural* Attributes of God; such as Power, Wisdom, &c. which depend entirely upon his Nature, and are absolute and unalterable, at *all* times and places; and sometimes, as it relates to his *moral* Attributes, and the exercise of his Power; which

(u) Court of the *Gentiles*, part iv. p. 370.

depends entirely on his *Will* and free unrestrained Volition; and this Power is exercised according to his divine Wisdom at *particular* times and places, as best suits the end and design of his moral Government.

'Tis worth while to observe here; how these great Men, in defence of their Hypothesis, use Words, instead of Ideas. To say—the Sins of Men *cannot* be forgiven freely, because the Laws of God *must* be vindicated; may seem at first sight to bear some Reason and Argument: but, in truth, it is a mere *Petitio Principii*; for the two parts of the proposition are left to prove one another. He that objects to the *first* part, objects also to the *second*; and we might with as much argument prove the converse: that the Laws of God *must* be vindicated, because the Sins of Man *cannot* be forgiven. But farther, to say—the *Laws* of God *must be vindicated*; either means the same as to say, the *breach* of God's Laws *must be punished*; or it does not. If it means the same thing, (as it must do; if there be no other way of vindicating God's Laws but punishing the breach of them :) then what is mean'd as a Reason and Argument, is mere Tautology: *viz.* the Sins of Men cannot be forgiven, because they must be punished: *that is*, because they cannot be forgiven. And if it does not mean the same thing, but there is some other way of vindicating God's Laws besides punishing; then

then the reasoning is false : and it does not follow ; that, because the Laws must be vindicated, therefore the Sinner must be punished : for they may be vindicated in some other manner. But, in truth ; whenever it pleases Almighty God to *forgive* Sin, it is contrary to Fact as well as to common Sense, to assert any *Necessity* that the Laws of God should be vindicated at all.

An Hypothesis built upon such Contradiction to the divine Attributes, must either sink with it's own weight, among all men of Sense ; or will sap the very foundation of all Revelation, that is pretended to be founded upon it.

Having now done with the unscriptural Opinion of the *Christians*, who teach that God has not the Power to forgive Sins freely ; or without the *punishment* of the Sinner, or of a Mediator in his stead : I am immediately called-upon on the other hand, to answer an objection of the *Deists* ; that God cannot forgive Sins *by*, or *for* the sake, or at the *Intercession*, of a *Mediator* ; which is no less opposite to the *Christian* Doctrine. Mr. *Chubb* is so extravagantly sanguine upon this subject, that he tells us ; “ If the Apostles themselves preached any such doctrine, they were mistaking ; and even a miraculous Confirmation of it, would not make it credible.” And indeed, as he understands it, he may bid defiance to whom he pleases ; for he entirely mistakes the Sense of the Doctrine revealed ;

and it is impossible that the Apostles should have understood it, in such a sense as He does.

He quotes the Texts in the Margin(x), and particularly *Eph.* iv. 32. to shew it to be the doctrine of the Apostles, that we are forgiven for *Christ's sake*; and then objects in this manner—"If the Apostles did teach this doctrine; "*viz.* that it is upon *Christ's* account, and for "*his sake*; that God forgives penitent Offenders "*—then in this as they greatly departed from "*the Truth, so they went greatly beyond the "*design and intent of their Master; by making***

(x) *Chubb on Redemption*, p. 97. *Rom.* v. 9, 10. Much more then, being now justified by his *blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by (διὰ) by the *death* of his Son, &c.

Eph. i. 7. *Col.* i. 14. In whom we have *Redemption* through (διὰ) *blood*; even the forgiveness of Sins. *Eph.* iv. 32. Forgiving one another, even as God for *Christ's sake* (ἐν Χριστῷ) hath forgiven You.—*Heb.* ix. 12. By (διὰ) his own *blood* he entered in once into the holy place; having obtained eternal *Redemption* for Us.

I Pet. ii. 24. Who his own self bare our Sins in his *Body* on the Tree. iii. 18, For *Christ* also hath once suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust; that he might bring us to God.

I John i. 7. But, if We walk in the light, as he is in the light; We have fellowship with one another: and the *blood* of *Christ* cleanseth us from all Sin. *Rev.* i. 5. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own *blood*—v. 9. For thou wast slain; and hast redeemed us to God by thy *blood*.

" that

“ *that* the *ground* of God’s mercy to penitent
 “ Sinners, which *Christ* had not made so : and
 “ therefore, this Doctrine is no part of *Christi-*
 “ *anity.*” And again, he says ; “ It may be
 “ urged, that the Apostles taught this Doctrine ;
 “ that God was *made* placable or merciful to
 “ penitent Sinners, by the Sufferings and Death
 “ of *Christ* : as their Writings do plainly shew.”

But, it must be observed here ; that Mr. *Chubb* has never proved, nor attempted to prove, that forgiving Sins *for Christ’s sake*, is *equivalent* to *making* his Sufferings the *ground* of God’s mercy ; or to *making* God placable or merciful : though he considers them as synonymous Propositions : whereas in truth they are extremely different.

And, if Mr. *Chubb* had studied the language of the Old Testament ; and observed, that God is said to do that, *for the sake* of an Intercessor, which he designed to do, *prior* to his Intercession ; as when He directed *Abimelech* to seek for pardon by the prayers of *Abraham*, and the friends of *Job* by the prayer of *Job* ; he could never have so misunderstood the Words of these Texts : but must have seen ; that neither the Merits of *Abraham*, nor of *Job*, were the *grounds* of God’s Mercy, nor that which *made* him placable or merciful ; but that God was ready, and willing, and desirous to forgive, before any such prayers were made ; and only waited, to do it in such a
 manner

manner as might best shew his regard to Righteousness.

Mr. *Chubb* therefore has understood the expression, *for Christ's sake*, in a sense of his own; and not in the sense of Scripture: and I will add farther; that he has understood it in a *forced* Sense, contrary to common use. For, when it is said; that a person does a Benefit, or forgives an Injury; upon the *Intercession*, or for the *Sake*, of another; it is never mean'd, that such Intercession *made* the person apply'd-to either benevolent, or placable; nor can it be intended to depreciate his natural disposition to forgiveness, or to exclude any *other* motives and considerations, which might persuade to that *particular* act of benevolence: but it barely means, that it was a *motive* to it. And one would imagine; that a person well inclined to Revelation, would rather have explained these words in any manner they are possibly capable of, than in a sense so big with Absurdity and Contradiction: for it is equally absurd and antichristian and antitheistical, to say, that any Combination of Circumstances can *make* God merciful or placable; as to say, that they can *make* him just and good and true. The Attributes of God are eternal and unchangeable, and are not to be affected by the conduct of *any* Being: but his providential Acts *may be*, and certainly *are*, affected by the Virtues or Vices of his Creatures; and, if they were not
so

so affected, he could not be a moral Governor; by the exercise of a judicial Providence. Repentance is a *cause* or *motive* to forgiveness; but it does not *make* God placable or merciful(y).

The true sense of the Words must be taken from the Scripture; where the Phrase [*for the sake of*] is used in a popular sense, and adapted to common language. Logical and Philosophical Writers may take what pains they please to distinguish nicely and precisely the different kinds of Causes which they speak of; as the first and *original* Cause, which in every thing is God himself; the *ministerial* Causes by which he brings about his decrees; the *efficient* Cause, by which they are performed; the *final* causes or ends, for which they are design'd: But these nice distinctions and subtleties are not used in Scripture. On the contrary, whatever act is performed, let the *causes*, which combined to effect it, be ever so numerous; the purposes, designed by it, ever so various; the accidental effects, ever so opposite to the ends proposed; they are all spoken of in the Scripture in the same language, as the *cause* or *reason*, by which, or for which, or for the sake of which, the action was performed. Thus, with regard to the *efficient* Cause; we are said to be saved by Faith, by Works, by the Word of God, by Baptism, by Hope, by Grace,

(y) See Jer. xxxvi. 3.

by the Death of *Christ*, by his Life, by the words of *St. Peter*, by the words of *St. Paul*, by the foolishness of preaching, by calling on the name of the Lord, by enduring to the end, &c. by all these causes singly, we are said to be saved, in the *new* Testament: and yet it is most certain, that not one of them must be so understood as to exclude all the rest.

The *final* Causes and accidental Effects are likewise spoken-of in Scripture, in one and the same manner; and we are not only told, that *Christ* came into the World to save the World(*z*); and to fulfil the Law and the Prophets(*a*); and to give his Life a Ransom for many(*b*); but also that he came, not to send Peace, but a Sword; and to set a Man at variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother(*c*); though the Intent, for which he undoubtedly came, was to reconcile and unite the whole world in the bonds of Amity and Love; and these were only *accidental* Consequences, which thwarted his designs(*d*). I shall add one instance, to shew; that

(*z*) *Jo.* iii. 17. (*a*) *Mat.* v. 17. (*b*) *Mat.* xx. 28.

(*c*) *Mat.* x. 34.

(*d*) See *Dr. Sam. Clarke* on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, 7th edit. p. 421. where he gives many instances in proof of this: particularly with regard to the expressions of Prophecies, this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet. Whereas, on the contrary, the thing was not to be done because it was

that Causes and Effects are spoken-of in the same lax sense, in the *old* Testament. The Angel of God declares to *Abraham*, when he would have offered-up his Son *Isaac*; “By my self have I sworn, saith the Lord; for *because* thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the Heavens, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; *because* thou hast obeyed my voice(*e*). Here the promise is made to *Abraham*, *because* he did not withhold his Son, his only Son; and yet it is very certain, that it was made to him *long before*; even before that Son was born (*f*): So that it can mean no more, than a *fresh* motive for performing what had been before promised to him.

The case is just the same; when it is said more expressly, that any thing is done for *the sake* of a *thing* or *Person*. Thus it is said(*g*), Believe me for [*διὰ*] the very work’s sake; *that is*, upon *account-of* my works: and the general Sense is no

was predicted, but predicted because it was to be done. So the words, THAT such a thing may be, do not signify the intention, to the end that it may be, but merely the Event, so that it will be.

(*e*) Gen. xxii. 16.
xiv. 11.

(*f*) Gen. xii. 3.

(*g*) John

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more ;

more; for the words may be taken in a good or bad sense. When it is said, every one that forsaketh houses, &c. for my name's *fake* (*b*); [*ἐνεκεν*] it means, out of *regard* to my name; but when it is said, all these things will they do unto you, for my name's *fake* (*i*); [*διὰ*] it means the direct contrary; or, out of *hatred* to my name. And moreover, when a thing is done for the fake of *one* thing; it may also be done for the fake of an *other*: for these causes are not supposed to be inconsistent, but merely separate motives. Thus, St. Paul says; to whom I forgave, I forgave it for your fakes (*k*). They came, not for Jesus' fake only [*διὰ*] (*l*); but that they might see *Lazarus* also. And God is said to have defended *Jerusalem* for his own fake, and for his servant *David's* fake (*m*). And *Herod* to have beheaded *John*, for the Oath's fake; and them that sat with him at meat (*n*). And God does the same thing for his *own* fake, and his *word's* fake, and his *mercy's* fake, and his *truth's* fake, and his servant *David's* fake: and sometimes the causes are *reciprocal*; as when God is said to exalt the Kingdom of *David*, for *Israel's* fake; and at other times to bless the *Israelites*, for *David's* fake. And *Christ* is said to suffer for *our* fake; and *we* to suffer for *his* fake (*o*).

(*b*) *Mat.* xix. 29. (*i*) *John* xv. 21. (*k*) *II Cor.*
 ii. 10. (*l*) *John* xii. 9. (*m*) *Kings* xi. 12, 13. *If.*
 xxxvii. 35. (*n*) *Mat.* xiv. 9. (*o*) *Phil.* i. 9.

We see then, what a great Liberty was open to Mr. *Chubb* of interpreting the expression, for *Christ's sake*; without fixing it to the most improbable one which the words are capable of.

However, it should be remarked; that there is no expression, in the Greek Testament; which necessarily signifies, that our Sins are forgiven us for *Christ's sake*. The words, which Mr. *Chubb* particularly fixes upon, are these; “As God for *Christ's* sake hath forgiven You:” but the original is, as God hath forgiven you in *Christ*; [καθὼς καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἔχαρισατο ὑμῖν (p)]. The action is here supposed to be passed; and, consequently, relates to the forgiveness of the first *Christians*; when they received the Faith. Mr. *Pyle* makes the following remark upon the Text —“Though it be true, that God forgives Men for *Christ's* sake; yet this seems not to be the strict meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ, in this place. It is in *Christ*, or by *Christ*; as in *Heb.* i. 1. [God] hath spoken to us [ἐν ὑμῶν] by his Son; and hath accepted us [ἐν ἀγαπήνῃ. it should have been ἡγαπημένῳ] in the beloved. *Eph.* i. 6. The Sense seems plainly to be; God forgives, in or through *Christ*; viz. by him preaching and declaring and granting Forgiveness upon Man's Repentance.

But there is another Sense, in which we may be said to be saved or forgiven for *Christ's* sake;

(p) *Eph.* iv. 32.

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that lies more open to Mr. *Chubb's* Objections, and against which he seems particularly to point his Arguments: *to wit*, that we are forgiven by his *Intercession*; or in answer to it.

Now though I *think*, we are no where said *expressly* in the Scripture to be forgiven *for the sake of Christ's Intercession*; and the word ἐνθυγχάμεν (*q*) rather relates to his care over us, in managing our affairs as a mediator; than any actual address to God in our behalf: yet, as we are *certain*, that he did pray for us; we may be sure, his Prayers were not *useless*: and, consequently, his Intercession was one *cause* or *motive* of our Salvation, and a motive, which does by no means interfere with the free grace of God; which is the *original* or first mover in our Salvation; or the power of *Christ*, which is the *efficient* cause.

There are many things in *Prayer*, so agreeable to our Nature; that they must be very strong arguments indeed, that can prove it of no effect to gain our wishes and desires. Our Gratitude naturally expresses itself in Thanksgiving: and every kind of Excellence demands from all intelligent Beings an Acknowledgment or Con-

(*q*) ἐνθυγχάμεν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, *makes intercession for us*; by negotiating and managing, as our friend and agent, all the affairs relating to our Salvation. *Taylor on the Romans*, viii. 27. In *Acts* xxv. 24. it signifies to deal-with, in a bad Sense.

cession

fession of it; which, when referred to God, is Praise: for, to *praise* God, is only to *speake the Truth* of him, and declare what we see and know of him; and our Dependence on any one so naturally expressees itself in Petition, that it is looked-upon as a necessary act in the Dependent, be the Patron ever so well inclined to gratify him: because it is fit and right; that he, who receives a Favour, *as a Dependent*, should by some overt-act expresse, that he does not expect it, *as his Right and Due*; but as an act of Grace and Favour: and therefore, when God had promised by the prophet *Ezekiel*, how abundantly he would at last bless them with spiritual and temporal blessings; after all he adds: “I will yet for all this be inquired at by the house of *Israel*, to do it for them(*r*).” And, if this were not the case, God would not have encouraged us to pray to him; nor, without such Hopes, would *Christ* himself have prayed: for Prayer without Hope is mere empty Sound.

I shall therefore consider our Saviour’s Intercession, in the sense in which Prayer has been used by all good men, whether Christians, Jews or Heathens; as a *motive* and *reason* with the supreme *Jehovah* to grant us our requests. And this notion of Prayer is founded, not only upon the Authority of the Apostles, but of *Christ*

(*r*) *Ezek.* xxxvi. 37.

himself.

himself. So that Mr. *Chubb's* objections will reach farther than, I imagine, he intended. St. *John* says, This is the Confidence we have in him; (*i. e.* in God) that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us (*s*): Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him; because we keep his Commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight (*t*): and *Christ* himself says, All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive (*u*). And the effect of Prayer is not confined to ourselves, but extended to all men: and if we are commanded to pray for one another; for Kings, and all that are in Authority (*x*); and particularly for our Friends and Brethren (*y*): what reasonable objection can be made to the Intercession of *Christ* for us all; whether we be considered as his *Subjects*, or his *Brethren*? Indeed, it would be inconceivable; that *Christ*, who frequently spent whole nights in Prayer, should never pray for the Success of his Ministry (*z*); or that God Almighty should not bless him with Success, in answer to his Prayers (*a*); that his own Pleasure might prosper in his hand (*b*).

(*s*) I *John* v. 14. (*t*) I *John* iii. 22. (*u*) *Mat.*
 xxi. 22. *Mark* xi. 24. *Luke* xi. 9. *John* xiv. 13. xv.
 16. xvi. 23, 24. (*x*) I *Tim.* ii. 1, 2. (*y*) I *John* v.
 16. (*z*) *John* xvii. (*a*) *Is.* xlix. 6. (*b*) *Is.* liii.
 10.

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If it be objected to this; that the Prayers of the Righteous can never change the designs of God, who is *unchangeable*, it is allowed: but we have no reason to believe, the Designs of God are ever *absolutely* determined: except, where he has *declared* them to be so; or when it necessarily follows from his Attributes.

But let us consider the Nature of Prayer and Intercession, in these three Cases.

1. In regard to such events, as are unfix'd and undetermined by God; and indifferent.
2. In regard to such, as are already determined contrary to our requests.
3. In regard to such events, as are agreeable to the Will of God; and such as he approves of.

In many very interesting affairs of this world, we know by Revelation, that the Will of God is frequently *undetermined*, and *conditional*, and *dependent upon* the good or ill behaviour of societies and private men. Thus God speaks to the *Israelites*; If ye *walk* in my Statutes, then will I give Peace—but, if ye *will not* hearken unto me, then will I set my face against you—and, if ye *will not* be reformed, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you in fury; and ye shall eat the flesh of your Sons(c), &c. This twenty-sixth chapter

(c) *Lev. xxvi.*

of *Leviticus* is entirely *conditional*, and regards the whole *Jewish* Nation; and consequently, the decree to reward or punish them could not be *fix'd* and *absolute* either way, when these Promises and Threats were revealed.

If our Nation had obeyed God, He would have extended their Empire; but, as they did not, He raised-up the *Affyrians*, *Babylonians*, &c. to afflict and punish them. The same uncertain and conditional state of events, with regard to the whole *Jewish* Nation, is very remarkable in the Song of *Moses*(*d*). And, if such great Events as these are *undetermined* and conditional, in which whole Empires are concerned; the smaller ones, which were only necessary to bring about the greater; and all the consequences of these greater events, must also be undetermined; and the same conditional Providence must unavoidably extend in like manner to Individuals: and so it is declared in many instances——as particularly, when *Jeremiah* declares to *Zedekiah*, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; If thou wilt assuredly go forth to the King of *Babylon's* Princes, then thy Soul shall live; and this City shall not be burned with Fire(*e*). And, if this be the true State of the Case, the Subject of Prayer is infinite; and the benefit of it may be so too, without supposing

(*d*) *Deut.* xxxii. See also *Jer.* xxii. 3. 4. (*e*) *Jer.* xxxviii. 17. *Acts* xxvii. 31, 32. See *I Sam.* xiii. 13.

it to produce any change in the Will of God; as will more clearly appear, from the nature of Causes and Effects.

God is the original Cause of every effect; and directs all Actions, in their ultimate tendency, to some great and good and wise End: and in general, if not always, carries-on his designs by his Creatures; in order to employ, amend, and improve Them. And, as every Action may have many different Consequences; and He sees the several Uses, that can be made of every one of them: the same Act, which serves to complete *one* purpose, may be so directed by his Wisdom and Power; as to begin, carry-on, or complete *many others* at the same time: and every Effect, that is thus brought-about, becomes a Cause to carry-on the designs of God still farther; and the whole Universe is by these means kept in action in all its parts at once, both as Cause and Effect (*f*); and the designs of God move forward by his superintendence, and his interposition, whenever he pleases, to that ultimate great and good and wise end; as certainly, as if it were a single Atom, impressed in any given Direction; and yet consistently with

(*f*) The tracing the Chain of Causes is the most noble Pursuit of Philosophy; but we meet with no Cause, but what is in itself to be considered as an Effect; and are able to number but few links of the Chain. *Maclaurin*, account of Sir I. N. p. 17.

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the free Will of his Creatures : For, if the Causes, which operate at any given Time, are not *sufficient* to effect his purpose ; He can combine or produce *others* that *are* : And as every single effect may be produced by an infinitely various combination of Circumstances : (suppose the destruction of the Temple, or the building it up again) these may be determined for a long time before ; and yet that *very Time*, the *Persons* concerned, and the *several Causes* necessary to bring about these things, may continue *uncertain and arbitrary* ; till near the time of their Accomplishment. Thus, a *Nebuchadnezzar* may be suddenly raised-up for the Destruction of the Temple ; or a *Cyrus*, for its Restoration. An instance of this we find in the Case of *Saul* ; when *Samuel* declares to him—“ Now would the Lord have established thy Kingdom upon *Israel* for ever ; but now thy Kingdom shall not continue : the Lord hath sought him a man after his own Heart, &c(*g*).

And if it should so happen, that the accomplishment of his designs, in any *one* out of a thousand combinations of circumstances, by which it might be completed, should add to the happiness of such men, as *Moses*, *Daniel*, or *Job* ; this Consideration may be of sufficient weight with God, to determine the Event in compliance

(*g*) I *Sam.* xiii. 13, &c.

with their Prayers; rather than in any way, not attended with so good an effect. Thus we find the City of *Zoar* was saved, at the instance of righteous *Lot*(*b*). And we may be always certain, that an Almighty and all-perfect Being will never act in an *arbitrary* manner; when it is *possible* to act otherwise: or where the action may be so directed by him, as may tend to the reward and encouragement of Virtue. And thus the Subject as well as the Benefit of Prayer may be infinite.

I shall only observe farther, upon this head; that the unalterable decree of God to judge every man according to his works, as a righteous Judge and moral Governor; does by no means interfere with his conferring whatever Benefits he pleases, as an all-powerful Creator: in respect of which his determinations may be always open to the Prayers of the Righteous, to the very time of their Completion.

2. I shall consider Prayer, with regard to such events; as are already determined contrary to our Requests.

And in this case it is certain, that our Prayers will not be granted: And therefore in the Scriptures we are ordered not to make such things the Subject of our Prayers. For thus saith the Lord to *Jeremiah*: Pray not thou for this Peo-

(*b*) *Gen.* xix. 20.

ple—for I will not hear them, when they cry unto me for their trouble(*i*). And again; thus said the Lord unto me: Pray not for this people, for their good(*k*). And again; then said the Lord unto me: Though *Moses* and *Samuel* stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this People: cast them out of my Sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass; if they shall say unto thee, Whither shall We go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for Death, to Death; and such as are for the Sword, to the Sword; and such as are for the Famine, to the Famine; and such as are for the Captivity, to the Captivity(*l*). And the new Testament speaks in the same manner(*m*); agreeably to the Example of *Christ*(*n*).

3. Let us consider the effect of Prayer, with regard to such events; as are *agreeable* to the Will of God: or such as He approves of. And here it is objected; that all such things, as are *agreeable* to the Will of God, will certainly be accomplished; whether we pray or not: and therefore, in this case, our Prayers will be as *useless*; as when we pray for things *improper*. But this Objection is founded on a mistaken notion; that the Will of God is always *absolute*: whereas it is frequently only *conditional*.

(*i*) *Jer.* xi. 14.

(*k*) *Jer.* xiv. 11.

(*l*) *Jer.* xv. 1, 2.

(*m*) *John* v. 16, 17.

(*n*) *Jo.* xvii. 9.

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There is no doubt but, in all cases, where the Will of God is absolute; (as in the Resurrection of the Dead, both good and bad;) it will certainly be accomplished, whether we pray or not. But, when it is the design of God, that Mankind should bring down blessings upon themselves, as his dependents and creatures; by the propriety of their behaviour in their addresses to him, as their Creator and Benefactor; this End could not be answered in any other manner, than by granting his Blessings in answer to their Prayers: For Blessings, given in reward of Virtue and Piety, are the highest encouragements to the practise of Virtue and Piety. And therefore, when the Deist argues; that, if it is agreeable to the Will of God to grant Salvation to Mankind; he will grant it, without a Mediator: and, if it be not agreeable to his Will to grant it; he will not grant it, for the sake of a Mediator: he mistakes a *conditional* decree for an *absolute* one; and argues as weakly, as if he were to conclude; that, if it were agreeable to the Will of God to grant us a plentiful Harvest, he would grant it without our labour in plowing and sowing; and, if it were not his Will, he would not grant it by means of it: or, as Dr. Richard Price expresses the same thought in a better manner; if it is *fit*, that our Sins should be forgiven; God will forgive

give us, if we do not repent; and, if it is *unfit*, our Repentance will be of no use.

There are many instances in Scripture; where we see, as plainly as in these; that the particular *manner*, in which the Providence of God acts, is as *necessary*, as the event proposed. So that, if it was not done in that particular manner, it would not be done at all. This is equally remarkable, in natural, as in revealed Religion. We know, without the help of Revelation; that it is agreeable to the Will of God, that the distresses of Mankind should be relieved; and yet we frequently see them left to the precarious Benevolence of their fellow-Creatures, whether they shall be relieved or not: and, if they are not relieved by *them*, they are not relieved *at all*. In the Case of Revelation, I shall Instance the affair of *Naaman* the *Syrian*. God was well pleased, that he should be healed of his Leprosy; but he was not willing, that it should be done; except in *one particular manner*: which might at the same time serve the cause of Righteousness, by bringing Honour and Reverence to the God of *Israel*. *Abana* and *Pharphar* were as famous, as any of the Rivers of *Israel*. Could he not wash in Them, and be clean? yes, certainly he might; if the design of God had been no more than to *heal him*: or it might have been done, as *Naaman* expected, by the Prophet's striking his hand over the place; without any washing,

washing, or even any appearance of the hand of Providence. But the *healing* Him was not the only design of God, nor the most important one; though it was the most remarkable event: God had a moral end in view, which could not be brought about by any of the above methods; and the *manner* of the Cure was of more importance in the designs of God, than the *Cure itself*: the effect being produced for the sake of manifesting to the whole Kingdom of *Syria* the great Power of the God of *Israel*: by which the Cure was performed. It does not therefore follow; that, because it is agreeable to the Will of God to grant a Petition, or dispense a Favour; for *Christ's* sake, or upon account of his Intercession; that he would have dispensed the same Favour in any other manner: for perhaps there was no other way, in which it could be done, consistent with Wisdom and the Cause of Righteousness.

And, if Mr. *Chubb* had not been greatly embarrassed with the notion, that the Doctrine of Forgiveness for *Christ's* sake was to be understood in such a manner; as to *prevent*, or rather *pervert*, the just and impartial Judgement of the great Day; (by declaring the wicked to be just, by a mere act of Grace and Favour, and contrary to Fact;) there is no reason to believe, he would have made any objection to our Salvation for *his* Sake: Because in the sense I am considering it, as free from those difficulties; he has
plainly

plainly argued in behalf of the *Christian* Doctrine, though he was not aware of it: by asserting, that “God may, if he pleases, shew kindness to his Creatures, independent of all Merit(o).” A Concession, which is most certainly true; or else there would be no Creation, nor Forgiveness: but it overturns all the Objections he has made upon this Subject; as far as the true *Christian* Doctrine is concerned. For, if God can shew Kindness to Mankind, *independent* of their Merit; He can certainly shew the same or greater Kindness to them, if it should in any degree promote the Joy or Honour of his beloved Son; whom he loves and esteems: and therefore God may advance the Joy and Honour of *Christ*, in *this* way; as well as in *any other*, that would be equally agreeable to him; and Mankind may be blessed for the *sake of Christ*, *independent* of their own Merit: and, if *Christ* should petition for such a Blessing to them, as a Favour and Reward to Himself; the Grant might be in answer to his Petition. And nothing could be objected to this, but their being improper Objects of such Favour; which I shall consider presently.

Let the question lie, as it actually happened between Man and Man; and then I argue—if *David* might confer Favours upon *Chimham* the Son of *Barzillai*, *independent* of his Merit; and

(o) Inquiry concerning *Redemption*, p. 92.

was at the same time willing to grant such a favour to *Barzillai* himself, as should be most agreeable to him; and *Barzillai* should intercede for a favour to his *son*; there can be no reason given, why such a blessing should be withheld. And this was the fact, intirely agreeable to our notions of Rectitude and Propriety; when *Barzillai* the *Gileadite* came down from *Rogelim*, and went over *Jordan* with *David*, to conduct him over *Jordan*; to whom when the King offered a reward, he refused it for Himself: but Behold, says he, thy Servant *Chimham*, let him go over with my Lord the King; and do to Him what shall seem good unto Thee(*p*). Now there can be no good reason given, why *Chimham* should not receive the Favours upon his Father's Intercession. But Mr. *Chubb* says, upon the parellel Case in our Redemption by *Christ*; "No—the Reward would be placed upon a wrong object(*q*).” But this is not true. For, though the Son receives a Blessing, as a Favour; it is no *Reward* to Him: but as much a *free Gift*, as if there had been no Intercession made. The *Reward* is the *Father's*; and in that Sense the King considered it, in his answer: *Chimham* shall go over with me; and I will do unto Him, that which shall seem good unto Thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that shall I do for Thee. And, in like manner,

(*p*) II *Sam.* xix. 31, 37, 38. (*q*) *Chubb*, p. 93.

the Blessings bestowed on Mankind are considered in the Scripture, as a Reward to *Christ*; and a *Joy, that was set before Him.*

And therefore, when Mr. *Chubb* adds; that, on such a supposition, the absence of Virtue would be favoured; while Virtue itself would go unrewarded: it may be answered, from his own Words; “that God may shew Mercy to his Creatures, *independent* of all Merit;” and this is the same thing as to say, that the absence of Virtue may be favoured; which he here objects-to as improper. But Virtue does not go unrewarded; if the Father receives a Reward and Satisfaction, in the Favours bestowed upon the Son. And therefore it may be true, for any thing this Writer hath advanced to the contrary; that *our* Sins may be forgiven for the sake of a Mediator, who loved us and gave himself for us; and upon *his* account, as a thing agreeable to *him*, and as a reward of *his* meritorious Obedience, and in answer to *his* Intercession. And yet these things can neither singly nor collectively be considered by the Apostles, as the *ground* of God’s Mercy; or that which *made* him placable or merciful: because they all declare, that God himself first planned the method of Forgiveness in this manner; and sent his Son, of his own free grace and favour, to execute it: and consequently, was *placable* and *merciful*, *prior* to any such Mediation or Intercession.

But

But here it is objected ; that “ forgiveness of Sin is not of the same nature with other Favours or Blessings ; because it depends upon the State and Temper of the Persons concerned : So that, if it be in the nature of the thing *right*, that God should pardon penitent offenders ; then he *will* certainly do it ; and he will do it for this reason, because it is *right* that he should : this motive being sufficient to determine the divine Will, to do what is right and fit, exclusive of all other motives or considerations whatsoever : and, if it be in the nature of the thing *wrong*, that God should pardon penitent offenders ; then it is most certain, that God *will not* pardon them ; and he will not do it for this reason, *viz.* because it is wrong and unfit that he should : nor will any consideration prevail with him to act thus ; it being morally impossible that the Merits of ten thousand Redeemers, or any Application or Intercession to him, should prevail with him to do what is *wrong*.”

Now if we examine, how far the Christian and Deist are agreed ; in what Mr. *Chubb* has here laid-down, as an objection to our Forgiveness by a Mediator ; we shall easily see, that he has entirely mistaken the true State of the Case.

1. Then, it is agreed between the Christian and the Deist ; that no Considerations whatsoever will prevail with God to act contrary to Rectitude. And

2. It is agreed between the Christian and Deist, that it is consistent with Rectitude to forgive penitent Sinners; these being the only proper objects of forgiveness.

3. From hence, it follows; that, unless it can be proved, that the *Christian* Scriptures teach a Doctrine contrary to this; viz. that God will, for the sake of a Mediator, forgive the impenitent and obstinate Sinner; all that is here said by Mr. *Chubb* is no more an objection to Christianity, than to Deism. But this Doctrine can neither be proved from the Forgiveness of Sins, when the Gospel was first revealed; nor from the account which is given of the day of Judgment. For, when the Gospel was first preached, those only were forgiven; who repented of their former sins, and received the *Christian* doctrine to be the rule of their future Conduct: And, at the day of Judgment, it is plainly revealed, that we shall be judged according to our Works; and the wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life eternal.

Here then we find; that, though Forgiveness of Sin depends upon the state and temper of the Persons concerned; yet, as it regards none but *Penitents*, whom it is *right* and *fit* to forgive; it is of the same nature *in this respect* with all other Blessings, which it is *right* and *fit* to grant: And all that remains to be settled between the Christian and Deist is; not whether God will, forgive
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for the sake of a Mediator, those whom it is *wrong* to forgive; (as Mr. *Chubb* here seems to suggest;) but whether he will, for the sake of a Mediator, forgive those who alone are *the proper objects* of Forgiveness. The *act* of Forgiveness is therefore supposed to be right, both by the Christian and Deist; and they only differ in the *method* of it.

And here I think, we may safely venture to argue; that, when it pleases God to forgive penitent Sinners, he will choose to do it in such a way; as will appear both to Men and Angels, (when they understand it) to discourage all presumptuous Hopes in a sinful Life upon that account; and promote an Obedience to his commands for the future. And nothing could be so proper to this purpose; as to manifest, that God was the *Patron* of Righteousness and the *Rewarder* of it; by forgiving only the *Penitent*, and rewarding the Righteousness of the Mediator, so far beyond all human conception, with the godlike powers of raising the dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal life. For it is a known Maxim in Government; that Obedience to the Laws may be encouraged, either by rewarding the Good; or punishing the Bad; and, though *human* Governments are not able to reward every one, that is obedient to its Laws; and therefore we generally see their Laws are guarded by punishing the Offender; yet it is not so with God:
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He can promote Obedience to his Laws either way. And it was for want of applying this Observation to the present subject, that *Grotius*, Bp. *Stillingfleet*, and other learned men have imagined they saw a *moral Necessity* that God should *vindicate* the laws of his Government, either by the punishment of the Sinner; or of some other in his stead: not considering that the Laws of his Government, and the cause of Righteousness might be more effectually secured in some cases, by *rewarding the Righteous*; and that they could no otherwise be secured, in the case we are now considering: because the Sins of the Penitent are supposed to be forgiven, and consequently there could be no Punishment inflicted. We see then, all that Mr. *Chubb* has here advanced, when applied as an Objection to Christianity, is nothing at all to the purpose. For there is no body supposed to be punished contrary to Rectitude, in the Christian Revelation; and no body supposed to be forgiven, contrary to Rectitude. It was fit and right that the impenitent Sinner should be punished; and it is fit and right, that the Penitent should be forgiven, and forgiven in such a manner as should most effectually serve the cause of Righteousness.

And, if we consider farther, that Forgiveness of Sin in the Christian Revelation, includes not only freedom from Punishment; but a claim to eternal Life, as the free gift of God to all
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whose Sins are forgiven; and which, consequently, from the very nature of a free gift, may be given to whom he pleases, and in what manner he pleases, or not given at all, The Doctrine of Forgiveness by a Mediator, and eternal Life by, or through him, or for his sake, will remain unimpeach'd by any thing that Mr. *Cbubb* has here advanced. And the Deistical Scheme will fall as far short of the Christian, as a mere freedom from Punishment falls short of an eternal Happiness.

Thus we see; how the *Mediatorial* scheme of Salvation, as far as it has hitherto been considered, may be explained; agreeably to the divine Attributes, the nature of Man, and the ancient Scriptures given to our Fathers; and the fundamental Doctrine of Christianity freed from those Difficulties, with which it has been loaded both by its Friends and Enemies: *viz.* that Almighty God has an *absolute Right* either to forgive Sins, as an all-powerful Benefactor for his own *sake* and for his Mercy's *sake*; or for *the sake of a Mediator*, and at his Intercession; as he blessed *Israel*, for the sake of *Abraham* and *David*; and forgave the Sins of *Abimelech* and the friends of *Job*, upon the intercession and for the sake of *Abraham* and *Job*; in order to manifest, how much the fervent prayer of a righteous Man prevails with *Him*; as the patron of Righteousness and Judge of all the World. And we have
no

no reason to imagine; that God would have given Forgiveness and eternal Life to penitent Sinners, in any *other way*: because we cannot see how these Blessings could have been given in so safe and wise a manner; or how the tremendous Character of God, as our *moral Governor* and *Judge*, could be so effectually preserved by the punishment of the penitent Sinners; as by rewarding the Merits of *Christ* with these godlike powers, which were necessary to constitute him a Prince and a Saviour.

Upon these Principles, I shall prove in my next letter, that *Christianity* is built: and shew the whole scheme of Salvation by *Christ* to be worthy of all Acceptation, and to be one plain regular and consistent System of divine Œconomy; from the Beginning of the world to the End of it.

End of the FIFTH LETTER.

LETTER THE SIXTH.

It is *necessary* to know, *what* God hath revealed concerning the way of Pardon by Christ: It is *impossible* to know *more*, than he hath revealed. If men would forbear to explicate farther, there would be more Christianity, and less Controversy.

Whichcote's Aphorisms; 1054.

IN my last Letter, I undertook to prove; that Forgiveness of Sin is by no means contrary to the nature of God's government, whenever the Sinner is a *proper* object of Mercy, and Forgiveness is of more advantage to the cause of Righteousness, than Severity and Punishment. In such cases, there can be no Objection to the forgiveness of the Sinner, either by the immediate act of God; or by the mediation and for the sake of another Person, whom God

Sfff

is

is pleased to exalt to great Glory, and reward with the Power of forgiving: And so the Sinner may be forgiven, by the grace of God, for his *own* name's sake, as the *original* Cause; and by the power of a Mediator, as the Means or *efficient* Cause by which he accomplishes his Will: in the same manner, in which it is declared in the *old* Testament, that God shewed mercy to the *Jewish* nation; both for his own sake and his Servant *David's* Sake.

I farther observed; that the Condemnation to Death did not include in it an *Eternal* Death; or any repugnancy to a Resurrection to Life; if it should please God to vouchsafe to mankind so great an Act of Benevolence and Mercy. And from hence I argued; that our first parents, though condemned to die, yet were by no means in a desperate Condition, while under the Government of a merciful and all-powerful God: For the Love of God did not desert them, upon their expulsion from Paradise.

These things, and several others necessary to be previously considered, being already explained in my last Letter; I shall now procede to shew the *Christian* Scheme to be a regular, consistent, and rational plan of divine œconomy, from the beginning to the end of the World; and to that purpose shall undertake to prove—

First. That the original Design of God from the beginning was, to bring all good men to
Salvation;

Salvation; that is, to eternal Life and Happiness; by his Son *Jesus Christ*: and the first Cause and Mover in this gracious design was the free Grace and Love of God.

Secondly. That the Method, in which this Salvation hath been carried-on through all dispensations from the beginning, hath been conducted by the Ministration of *Jesus Christ* under different names and characters; either immediately in Person, or by his Angel or Angels.

Thirdly. That the efficient Cause or Means, by which the Salvation of Man will be completed, will be the Exercise of those godlike Powers, of raising the Dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal Life; which were conferred on *Jesus Christ* by the Father, in reward of his humiliation, sufferings, and death.

First. I am to shew; that it was the original Design of God from the beginning to bring all good men to eternal Life and Happiness, by his Son *Jesus Christ*; and that the *first* Cause and Mover in this gracious design was the free Grace and Love of God.

It is very plain, from what we are told by *Christ* himself, when he is giving an account of the future Judgement of mankind; that a Kingdom was prepared by God for the Righteous, before the foundation of the World(*a*). And

(*a*) *Mat.* xxv. 34.

into this Kingdom the *Messiah* tells us, that all the Righteous shall be admitted; without any consideration what Nation they might belong to, or under what Dispensation they might live; but merely whether they were Righteous or Wicked(*b*). And for this Reason *Christ* is called the Saviour of the World(*c*); and is said to have tasted Death for every man(*d*); and to be the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours (that is, the *Christians*) only, but for the Sins of the whole World(*e*): St. *John* says, he was the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World(*f*): and St. *Paul* says, He is the Saviour of all; especially of those that believe(*g*): So that no man is excluded from this Salvation; who is able to stand the Judgment of the great day. And this being the original design of God prior to our Creation, and relative to the whole World; it could arise from no other cause than Benevolence, or free Grace, or Love. No other Reason can be given, why God hath created any Being at all; much less why he promised eternal Life to the first Man, upon his Obedience; which was done prior to his Fall, and consequently prior to any Redemption or Intercession upon that account. It was God, who cannot

(*b*) *Mat.* xxv. 37. 41. (*c*) *John* iv. 4. (*d*) *Heb.* ii.

9. See *Whitby* on II *Pet.* ii. 1.

(*e*) *John* ii. 2.

(*f*) *John* i. 9.

(*g*) I *Tim.* iv. 10.

lie, who promised it *before the world began* (b): which was hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to the Saints (i): who verily was fore-ordained *before the foundation of the World*, but was manifest in the latter times (k). It was according to the good pleasure of his Will (l); according to the purpose of him that worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will.

All these Texts prove, that Salvation by *Christ* was decreed, prior to any Intercession or Sacrifice or Satisfaction, made to God the Father; and was the *original* design of God, when he created the World. And accordingly we find, that *Christ* came not *of himself*; but God *sent* him into the world, in order to complete that design. And we are told by St. *John*; that this was the pure effect of his *Love*. “God so *loved* the World, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish; but have everlasting life (m):” And again, “herein is Love, not that we loved God; but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins (n).” “In this was manifest the Love of God towards us; because he sent his only begotten Son, that we might live

(b) *Tit.* i. 2. *Rom.* xvi. 25. *Eph.* i. 4, 9. iii. 11. *I Pet.* i. 20. *Rev.* xiii. 8. xvii. 8. (i) *II Tim.* i. 9. *Col.* i. 26. (k) *I Pet.* i. 20. (l) *Eph.* i. 5. (m) *I John* iii. 16. (n) *I John* iv. 10.

through

through him (o):” and St. *Paul* says, “God commended his Love to us; in that, while we were yet Sinners, *Christ* died for us (p).”

This *Love* of God is frequently in the new Testament called the *Grace* or *Favour* of God; [*χάρις*:] “for the proper Signification of *Grace* is Favour; Favour in such a sense, as denotes Mercy and Forgiveness, in a Superior; either remitting something of his Right, or conferring something beneficial upon others; *freely*, and without any obligation of debt (q):” accordingly we are told by St. *Paul*, that we are justified *freely*, by God’s Grace; [*δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι*.] that is, *gratis*, of mere grace and favour; without any payment, or recompense, or equivalent (r): for this is the sense of the word, wherever it is

(o) I *John* iv. 8, 9. (p) *Rom.* v. 8. (q) Dr. *Sam. Clarke*’s Sermons, 8vo. vol. ii. p. 265. fol. vol. i. ser. xxix. p. 180.

(r) The Word *δωρεάν* is only used in the following places in the new Testament. *Mat.* x. 8, they hated me *without a cause*. *Rom.* iii. 24, being justified *freely* by his grace through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus. II *Cor.* xi. 7, I preach to you the Gospel *freely*; which the apostle explains by saying, he was chargeable to no man; in ver. the 9th. and opposes it to his taking wages, in ver. 8. *Gal.* xi. 21, If Righteousness came by the Law, then Christ is dead *in vain*. *Thess.* iii. 8, Neither have we eaten of any man’s labour *for nought*. *Rev.* xxi. 6, I will give him of the water of Life, *freely*. xxii. 17, Let him take of the Water of Life, *freely*. See *Sykes*’s Scrip. Doct. p. 347.

used

used in the new Testament(s). And he calls our Salvation [*χάρις*] Grace or Favour (t); and a free Gift (u); and the gift of Grace; and the abounding of Grace(x).

But Dr. *Clarke* says; It was no less truly and properly a *free* Gift of God, to appoint and to accept that Satisfaction; (*viz.* the Sufferings of *Christ* :) than it would have been, to have granted Remission, if he had so pleased, without any Satisfaction at all(y).

But can any one be said to be justified or forgiven *freely*; when a recompense and compensation is paid for the Justification? The transferring the Punishment from one person to another, may be a free Act; but our *Justification* cannot be *free*, unless the Sin is actually *forgiven*. For how can that be a free Gift, which is paid for? And what could be desired, by the severest Creditor; more than a payment of the Debt, by an exact and adequate Satisfaction? And can any Man believe; that the Grace of God, which St. *Paul* so highly magnifies, means no more than a Readiness to receive a full and adequate Payment and Satisfaction from a different person than the Sinner? Here is no appearance of any free Gift; or any sign of Mercy at all.

(s) *Rom.* v. 21. (t) *χάρισμα*, *Rom.* v. 15. (u) ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι ver. 15. (x) ἡ περισσεία τῆς χάριτος ver. 17. (y) Vol. II. p. 130. fol. Serm. cxxxvi.

Dr. *Clarke* is strangely embarrassed on this question. He allows; that “the Satisfaction made by *Christ* was not by way of *exact equivalent*, which God was *bound* to accept; as in the case of one man’s paying a debt for another. For in that case, he says, “no acknowledgement was due to him to whom the debt is paid; but to him only who pays it.” Neither could it with Truth be affirmed; that God forgives men’s sins *freely*, and out of *mere Grace* and Mercy; if Satisfaction were made for them in that Sense(z).” But the question is not, whether he was *bound* to *receive* the Satisfaction, or not; But whether it was *actually made*, or not. If it was an equivalent for the Debt due, and was actually *paid*; it follows as above, that no Acknowledgement was due to the person to whom it was paid: there could be no Grace or Favour in the Forgiveness; because there was no Forgiveness. And, if it was *not* an Equivalent to the Debt due; then an adequate Satisfaction was not required: and, if the Sin may be forgiven without an *adequate* Satisfaction, it may be forgiven without *any* Satisfaction at all. And it will not be necessary, that the honour of God’s Laws should be vindicated; either by the Punishment of the Sinner, or by that of any innocent Person in his stead: but he may forgive the Sinner *freely*

(z) Vol. I. 305. oct. l. 81. fol. Serm. xiii.

in the sense in which St. *Paul* uses the Word; without any Payment, Satisfaction, or Recompense.

In short, if “the plain meaning of *Christ*’s making Satisfaction for us, is, as Dr. *Clarke* says, that God was pleased freely to appoint, and freely to accept, and of his mere *Grace* and *Mercy* to be satisfied with what *Christ* did and suffered, in Vindication of the divine Justice and the honour of God’s Laws and Government, and for the manifesting his irreconcilable hatred to Sin (*a*);” then I argue, as follows; If there was any Relaxation of Punishment in this Scheme, any Grace or Favour shewn, any thing short of an adequate Satisfaction—So far there was a Remission of Sin, [*ἀπορεάν*] and, if any *part* of the Sin might be forgiven, without a Satisfaction; so might the *Whole*: And our Justification and Salvation may arise *entirely* from the Benevolence and Grace and Love of God to Man; and be the Gift of God, and the free Gift, in the *proper* Sense of the Words; as it is represented through the whole Scripture; and in truth, it was the sense of this infinite Goodness, that reconciled the World to God.

And here it must be observed; that the doctrine of our Salvation by the free Grace of God, doth not depend upon a few obscure Texts; as

(*a*) *Clarke*’s serm. vol. I. p. 305. oct. l. 81. fol. Serm. xiii.

the notion of vicarious Punishment does : but the whole Scheme of Redemption by *Christ* is declared to be founded upon it ; viz. that God by *Christ* hath reconciled the World to himself : not that *Christ*, by suffering the Punishment due to Man, hath reconciled God to the World ; for the New Testament knows no such language ; but that God reconciled the World to himself, (by) not imputing their trespasses to them(*b*). And therefore the Apostle says, God hath committed to us the ministry of Reconciliation. But observe the nature and process of this Reconciliation. “ Now, says the Apostle, we are Ambassadors for *Christ* ; as though God did beseech you, by *us* : we pray you, in *Christ*’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” The only Objection to our Reconciliation to God is our Sins. By our Sins we throw ourselves at a distance from him ; and by Repentance and Amendment we approach him, and reconcile ourselves to

(*b*) II *Cor.* v. 18, 19. God is never said to be reconciled to the World ; because he was never at enmity with the World, but always willing to be their benefactor, if they would return to their duty. It was the World, that was at enmity with God ; and was to be reconciled by coming to the Knowledge of his Goodness to them. The same turn of Phrase was used by *Atticus* at his Mother’s Funeral ; when he boasted, *se nunquam cum matre in gratiam rediisse* ; that he was never reconciled to his Mother ; it was, because he was never at variance with her. *Nepos, Vit. Att.*

him

him (c) : and the Apostles, by preaching Peace, that is, Forgiveness, preached the doctrine of Reconciliation ; and *Christ*, by forgiving our Sins, reconciled us to God ; and God, by forgiving us by or through *Christ*, reconciled us to Himself : And We, by receiving the Lord for our God, according to the Revelation we received by *Christ*, reconcile ourselves to God by Him. And we must never forget ; that the Salvation, which *Christ* brought, was the Salvation of God(d). It was God, who appointed it, and sent it ; and all that *Christ* did in the

(c) *Simplicius* observes, that Repentance and Prayer ought to draw us nearer to God ; and not God nearer to us : as in a Ship, by fastening a Cable to a firm Rock, we intend not to draw the Rock to the Ship, but the Ship to the Rock. And, as God, is unchangeable, this is the only sense in which we can be said to approach him ; or to depart from him : we approach him by Righteousness, and depart from him by Sin ; but God is always the same. Thus *Is.* lix. 2. Your Iniquities have *separated* between you and your God : and your Sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. And consequently, we approach him by his setting our Sins as far from us, as the East is from the West. *Pf.* ciii. 12. *Sallust* the Philosopher speaks in the same manner, ch. xiv. Sed Dii quidem boni sunt semper, semper tantum benefici, noxii nunquam ; semperque in omnibus eodem modo se habent. Nos vero, dum sumus boni, propter similitudinem Diis conjungimur ; dum mali, propter dissimilitudinem ab iis separamur : et dum ex virtute vivimus, Diis adhæremus ; dum vitiis inquinamur, nobis illos hostes comparamus.

(d) *Luke* iii. 6.

Redemption of Man, was in obedience to God who sent him; as he himself has declared in a hundred places. And he sent him to give Remission of Sins to all that would *reconcile themselves* to God, by repentance and amendment of Life. And God took this method of reconciling the World to himself; because he *loved* the World. And this is the Reason; that, when *Christ* was born the Angels proclaimed, Glory to God in the Highest [or in Heaven], on Earth Peace or Forgiveness; or, what is the same thing, the manifestation of God's will to men(*e*). All this is plain and intelligible: but to assert, as some do; that the Death of Christ was a *Punishment*, which *he* underwent for *our* Sins; is a declaration, that our Sins are not forgiven at all; but only transferred, and the penalty paid by another Person: and a direct contradiction to every text in the new Testament, which speaks of the Goodness and Mercy of God in our Forgiveness. And therefore I conclude; that the *Christian* Religion is not founded upon Wrath of God against the Sins of Men, requiring a *vicarious* Punishment; but upon the *Benevolence* and *Love* and *Grace* of God to the World, offering by his Son a *free* Pardon; without any Punishment or Recompense at all.

Dr. *Samuel Clarke* says, very piously and justly;
 “ It may seem at first sight a pious extolling the

(*e*) See *Jos. Mede's* sermon on Christmas-day.

“ Love

“ Love of our Saviour, and the greatness of the
 “ Work he undertook—to describe the supreme
 “ Father and Creature of all things, as having
 “ no thoughts of Pity and Compassion towards
 “ his perishing Creatures; till moved thereto,
 “ as it were *against* his original intention, by
 “ the interposition of *Christ*. But they who
 “ thus argue; ought, on the other hand, to be
 “ aware, that it is no less injurious to Religion,
 “ to diminish the original Goodness and Com-
 “ passion of the Father of Mercies, &c. The
 “ coming of *Christ* was not the first cause of
 “ the Goodness and Love of God towards us;
 “ but the essential and eternal Goodness of God
 “ was the Cause and reason of the coming of
 “ *Christ*.—Most unjustly therefore, and with
 “ great injury to Religion, is God sometimes
 “ represented as an implacable and cruel Judge;
 “ delighting in the destruction of Sinners, till
 “ they were taken as it were out of his hands
 “ by the interposition of *Christ*. This, I say,
 “ is a very injurious Representation of the great
 “ God and Father of Mercies(*f*). Not only
 “ the Love of *Christ*, which is the *mediating*
 “ Cause; but the antecedent Love and essential
 “ Goodness of the Father Almighty, which is
 “ the *primary* and *original* Cause of their Salva-

(*f*) *Clarke's sermons*. vol. II. p. 217, 218, octavo. vol.
 I. ferm. xxvii. p. 167, &c. fol.

“ tion is always in Scripture represented and laid
 “ before them, as a motive of Gratitude; and
 “ a principal Argument to excite in them suit-
 “ able Returns of Love and Obedience to
 “ him(g).” And again, after several quotations
 from Scripture, he says; “ These and number-
 “ less other, the like passages in Scripture, do
 “ sufficiently declare;—that the Salvation of
 “ Men by the coming of *Christ* is and ought to
 “ be ascribed *primarily* to the antecedent Love
 “ and original essential Goodness of the Father
 “ Almighty(b).”

Mr. *James Foster*, in his very valuable Answer
 to Mr. *Tindal*, says: “ The New Testament no
 “ where represents God, as a rigorous and inexora-
 “ ble Being; who insisted upon full Satisfaction(i)
 “ for the Sins of Men, before he would be in-
 “ duced to offer terms of Reconciliation. It
 “ says indeed not one word of *Satisfaction*, much
 “ less of a *strict* and *adequate* Satisfaction; not
 “ a Syllable of the *infinite Evil* of a Sin; of in-

(g) *Ibid.* p. 222. l. 168. fol.

(b) *Clarke's* sermons, vol. ii. p. 227.

(i) *Satisfaction* is a word never once used in Scripture.
 It was without doubt well pleasing to God, and in that
 sense a *Satisfaction* to him; that *Christ* loved us, and gave
 himself for us, as an offering and sacrifice of a sweet-
 smelling favour, *Eph.* ii. 4. and God manifested his good
 pleasure, in rewarding him for it. But *Punishment* is so
 far from a *Satisfaction* to him; that he calls it his *strange*
 work. *Is.* xxviii. 21. And the Punishment of an innocent
 Person must be an Abomination in his Sight: Nothing can
 be a *Satisfaction* to God, but Righteousness.

finite

“ *finite Justice*; the *Hypostatical Union*, or the
 “ Deity’s being so united to the Man *Christ Je-*
 “ *sus*, as that the *two* infinitely distinct *Natures*
 “ constitute *one Person*; and by virtue of this
 “ Union giving an *infinite* value to the Sufferings
 “ of the human Nature, and enabling it to pay
 “ a strict *Equivalent* to God’s offended *vindictive*
 “ *justice*. All this, I say, is the invention of
 “ modern ages; (who by subtle distinctions and
 “ metaphysical obscurities have deformed true
 “ *Christianity* to such a degree, that scarce any
 “ of its original features appear :) and bears not
 “ the least similitude with the Language of the
 “ New Testament; in which the divine Being
 “ is always described, as *slow to anger*, merciful
 “ and condescending to the frailties of Mankind:
 “ and forgiveness of Sin represented, not as a
 “ thing for which a price of equal Value was
 “ paid; and which might consequently be de-
 “ manded, in strict Justice; but as a *voluntary*
 “ act of pure *Favour*, and the effect of free and
 “ undeserved Goodness(k).”

Secondly. I shall now procede to shew the
 Method, by which Almighty God has carried-
 on the Salvation of Man; through all the several
 Dispensations, from the beginning of the World;
 either immediately by *Jesus Christ* under differ-

(k) *Foster* against *Tindal*. p. 330.

ent names and characters; or mediately by his Angel or Angels.

As to the Fact itself, we are told; that it was by *him* that God made the Worlds; [τὰς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν.] constituted or appointed the Ages or Dispensations; that is to say, by *him* God formerly disposed and ordered those eminent and remarkable Periods of time, the antediluvian, patriarchal and *Mosaic* ages; and now the present. This was the πρόθεσις αἰώνων, eternal purpose or disposition of ages(*l*), of which the Apostle says, through Faith we see, the ages were framed (αἰῶνας κατήργησθαι) by the Word of God(*m*). And, as the former ages were under him; so was the age to come, called οἰκουμένη μέλλουσα or αἰὼν μέλλον(*n*), to be under him; by which the *Jews* understood the age of the *Messiah* (*o*); and accordingly he is called in the *Alexandrine* MS. of the LXX, the Father of the Age to come; as hath been observed: at the end of which he shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, from whom he received it; that God may be all in all(*p*).

In considering how these Ages or Periods of time have been conducted by Jesus Christ; I shall, first, give an account from the sacred History, in what manner He was engaged in promoting the Salvation of Man from the Creation

(*l*) *Eph.* iii. 2. (*m*) See *Sykes* on *Heb.* i. 2. and xi. 3.

(*n*) *Heb.* ii. 5. (*o*) *Is.* ix. 6. LXX. (*p*) *I Cor.* xv. 27.

till the end of the *Jewish* Œconomy: and secondly, in what manner he afterwards carried on the same Scheme and Design, in the character of *Messiah*, the Son of Man.

1st. I am to give an account, from the sacred History; in what manner Christ was engaged, in promoting the Salvation of Man; from the Creation till the End of the *Jewish* Œconomy.

We are told by *Moses*; that, in the beginning, *Elohim*, (by which word he sometimes means the Supreme *Jehovah*, and sometimes the Angel of *Jehovah*;) created the Heavens and the Earth. And the Christian Faith is this; that God created all things by *Jesus Christ*(*q*), and that without the Word of God was not any thing made that was made(*r*). *David* says, By the Word of *Jehovah* were the Heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth(*s*); which seems to be the same Doctrine. For, if it be objected; that *David* only mean'd, that the Heavens were made at his Command; which appears to be the sense of the words, in *Gen* i. 6, 9. where God says, Let there be Light; Let there be a Firmament; Let the Waters be gathered together, &c. the question will be, as *Irenæus* observes; “to *whom* did God give the Commandment?” and the answer must certainly be, to the Person who immediately obeyed his

(*q*) *Eph*. ii. 9.

(*r*) *John* i. 3.

(*s*) *Psf*. xxxiii. 6.

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Will:

Will: and who could that be, but the *Logos* or Word of God; to whom both Jews and Christians have ascribed it? And thus *Moses*, *David*, and the Apostles of Christ agree in the same Account.

As God *created* our first Parents by *Jesus Christ(t)*, so also did he *judge* them by Him. This Substitute or *Shechinah* of God made *Adam*; says A. Bp. *Tenison* (u); and he that gave him his *Being*, gave him most probably the *Law* of it. It was the Voice of *Jehovah* walking in the garden in the cool of the day, that conversed with them and condemned them; and this Voice could be no other than the visible *Jehovah*, or *Word* of God (x); according to the unanimous opinion of all the primitive Writers, that the *Elohim*, who is sometimes called the Angel of *Jehovah*, and sometimes *Jehovah*, was *Christ(y)*. And in pronouncing the Sentence upon the Tempter, he gave them the first hopes and comfortable assurance of his Mercy to them; by

(t) *Eph.* iii. 9. *Col.* i. 16. See p. 12. (u) *Tenison* of Idolatry, p. 321.

(x) They heard the Voice of the Word of God, says *Onkelos*; and A. Bp. *Tenison* quotes *Hilary*, *Tertullian*, and *Theophilus Antioch*, to the same Purpose. Perhaps God then appeared in the form of a Man, as *Gen.* xviii. says *Piscator* and *Oleaster*. See *Poli Synopf.* *Gen.* iii. 8. and the Words of *Theophilus*, Letter iii. p. 363.

(y) Reply to *Waterland's* Def. p. 177 and preced.

threat-

threatening that the Seed or Offspring of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head; by which *Adam* and *Eve* were delivered from the fear of immediate Death; and assured, that the World would be continued in their Posterity; and that one of their Descendents would get an Advantage over the person that had deceived them.

This Prophecy of the *Messiah*, to be sure, is very obscure; and indirectly intimated; nor indeed is it spoken, as a *promise* to *Man*, but as a *threat* to the *Serpent*; or rather, as our Fathers understood it, to *Samael*, the Angel of Death; the unclean Spirit, with whom our Doctors suppose the Serpent to have been united(z): and, whether our first Parents understood any thing more explicitly by it, we are not informed. The present time, when they were just about to receive the sentence of their own Condemnation; could not be a proper one to enlarge upon a Subject, which consisted merely of God's Grace and future Favours. The transition from their Sorrow and Shame to Joy and Hope, might have been too sudden; and have prevented their proper Effects. It was sufficient for their present Comfort, that they were not to die immediately.

(z) See *Ainsworth* ad loc.

The History that follows after the birth of *Enos* the Son of *Seth*, about the Year 230, informs us; that the wickedness of Man became great in the Earth, and every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. And *Maimonides* says; the Sons of *Adam* introduced the Worship of the Stars, and Spheres, and Images(*a*). And by comparing *Gen.* iv. 26. with *Gen.* vi. 2. it appears; that the Sons of *Seth*, who had separated from the wicked, and called themselves by the name of *Jehovah* (*b*); that is, the Servants of *Jehovah*, did afterwards mix with them again; and made intermarriages with the corrupted families. So that when *Jehovah* saw the earth, it was corrupt; for all Flesh had corrupted its way(*c*) upon the earth. And this wickedness became so great, in the sixteenth Century, in the days of *Noah*; that it repented *Jehovah*, that he had made Man; and it grieved him to the heart. So that, after having given warning by his preachers of Right-

(*a*) See the quotation from *Selden*, Letter iii. p. 402.

(*b*) This is the meaning of *Exod.* v. 3. נַקְרָא עֲלֵינוּ and so it should be read in *Ex.* iii. 18. and not נַקְרָח, the God of the *Hebrews* is called upon us. So it is rendered in both these places in the *LXX*, and in *Onkelos*, and in *Jerom's Latin* translation; and so We are called his People, *Ex.* vi. 3. *Dan.* ix. 9. *Is.* lxiii. 9. lxv. 1. See *Bp. Lloyd* on *Daniel's Weeks*.

(*c*) This word signifies Worship, *Amos* viii. 14. *Psf.* lxvii. 2. or any Religion, Doctrine, Manners, Action, &c. *Essay on Spirit*, note, p. 62.—*Ainsworth* ad loc.

teousness(*d*) for 120 Years, till eight persons only were left uncorrupted, he destroyed that obstinate and impenitent generation; just time enough to save one Family uncorrupted, to instruct their Children in virtuous Principles, and the Worship of the one God: by this well-timed Severity, the Race of *Adam* was preserved a second time from Destruction; as, by an act of Forbearance, in delaying the penalty of Death to our first Parents, it was preserved before.— And from the *Mosaic* account of this *Jehovah*, that the Sins of Mankind grieved him to the heart, agreeable to what is said of him in other parts of Scripture (*e*); and from his making a Covenant with *Noah*, we have reason to conclude; that it was not the Supreme *Jehovah* in Person, but the Angel of the Covenant.

After this all Men lived together in *Chaldaea*; till the days of *Peleg*, the fifth from *Noah*; when they divided the Earth between them. For *Jehovah* [that is, *Christ*, the *Jehovah* Angel] came down to see the City and Tower, which the children of Men builded (*f*); and, in order to

(*d*) St. *Peter* says, I *Pet.* iii. 19. that it was *Christ* preach'd in the days of *Noah*, by the same Spirit which raised him from the dead: that is, by the Holy Ghost.

(*e*) *Is.* lxiii. 9. *Jud.* x. 16. *Zech.* ii. 8. *Acts* ix. 4.

(*f*) *Gen.* xi. 5—8. *Novatian* argues from the words, let *Us* go down; that it could not be God the Father who came down; for his Essence is not circumscribed: nor yet

to restrain them from their undertaking, he confounded their Language; and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the Earth: and they left-off to build the City. So they spread themselves from *Babel* into the several Countries that fell to their shares; “carrying along with them the Laws, Customs and Religion, under which they had till those days been educated and governed by *Noah* and his Sons and Grandsons: and these Laws were handed down for the two succeeding Centuries to *Abraham*, *Melchisedek*, and *Job*; and *Job*’s friends appear to have been of the same Religion with himself(g).”

But,

yet an Angel; for it is said *Deut.* xxxii. 8. that the *Most High* divided the Nations. It was therefore He that came down, of whom *St. Paul* saith; He that descended is he that ascended above all Heavens. The *Arabic* reads, the *Angels* came down; that is, the *Shechinah*. *Tenison*, 324.

Justin Martyr says; “When God says, God went up from *Abraham*; the Lord spake unto *Moses*, the Lord went down to see the Tower, &c.” do not imagine, that the unbegotten God himself descended or ascended. For the unspeakable Father and Lord of all things, neither goes nor walks any where. Wherefore neither *Abraham*, nor *Isaac*, nor *Jacob*, nor any other Man ever saw *Him*, who is the Father and ineffable Lord of all things; even of *Christ* himself: But they saw *Him*, who by the Will of the Father is God, as being his Son; and an Angel, as ministering to his Will. *Dial.* p. 110.

(g) *Newton*’s Chronol. 187. And *Bp. Lloyd* says; The History of the Creation, with this Prophecy (of the seed of the Woman) and afterwards the History of *Noah*’s Flood

was

But, about this time; that is, about 400 years after the Flood; as the memory of that severe Visitation gradually lost its influence on the Religion and Morals of mankind, the worship of Idols began to spread abroad in *Chaldæa* and other countries; the effects of which must in time have proved fatal to all true Religion: and therefore, to prevent this growing evil, God called *Abraham*, the friend of God, out of *Ur* of the *Chaldæans*(*b*), where Idolatry prevailed; in order to reveal to him his Will, and keep up in his Family the Knowledge and Worship of the One God(*i*), and preserve the History of his Providence over Mankind from the beginning of the World, and the prophecies which related to future Events. So *Terah* took his Son *Abraham*, and *Lot* the Son of *Haran* his Son's Son, and *Sarah*, his daughter in Law, his Son *Abraham*'s wife; and they went forth with them from *Ur* of the *Chaldæans*, to go into the land

was doubtless conveyed from age to age by unwritten Tradition. *Expos. of Daniel's Weeks*, p. 22. and from hence *Moses* might receive it, and commit it to Writing.

(*b*) *Gen. xi. 31.*

(*i*) The Faith which was delivered to the *Jews*, as the first Principle of their Religion, is thus expressed by *Moses*, *Deut. vi. 4.* Hear, O *Israel*; *Jehovah* our God, *Jehovah* is One. This is one of the four paragraphs, which our Fathers used to write upon their Phylacteries; and read twice a day. But this belief hath been long lost, in almost all the Nations of the World; who under some pretence or other generally hold that *Jehovah* is more than One.

of

of *Canaan*; and they came unto *Haran*, and dwelt there: and *Terah* died in *Haran*. And, when *Abraham* was 75 years old, God called him out of *Haran* in *Canaan*; in the reign of *Melchisedek*(*k*), who was King of *Jebus*, afterwards called *Jerusalem*, and Priest of the Most High God; to whom *Abraham* voluntarily paid Tythes, and therefore he probably was of the same Religion.

At this time *Jehovah* made a Covenant with *Abraham* to be his God, and promised to make his Seed a mighty Nation, and to give them the land of *Canaan*, and that in his seed should all the families of the Earth be blessed (*l*); thereby appropriating to the seed of *Abraham* those blessings, and that victory over the unclean Spirit, which was before promised to the seed of the Woman. This Covenant *Jehovah* made with *Abraham*, first personally at *Sickem*, by the name of EL SHADDAI; that is, God Almighty (*m*); and did afterwards in the same name confirm it to his Son *Isaac*(*n*), and after him to his son *Jacob*(*o*), and after him to a nation that should come out of his loins (*p*): and he chose his Family to be his portion and inheritance (*q*): and the Reason given, why our Father *Abraham* was chosen from the rest of the world to prevent the

(*k*) *Gen.* xii. 4. (*l*) xii. 1. xiii. 14. xvii. 1. xxviii. 3.
 (*m*) xvii. 1. (*n*) xxviii. 3. (*o*) *Ibid.* xxxv. 11.
 (*p*) *II Sam.* vii. 12. (*q*) *Deut.* xxxii. 8.

spreading of Idolatry, was ; because God knew, that he would command his children and his household after him ; and they should keep the way (r) of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ; that the *Lord* might bring upon *Abraham* that which he had spoken of him (s) ; viz. that he should make him a great nation, and bless all the families of the earth in his seed (t) ; and accordingly he promises the *Israelites* to make good to them, by the name of *Jehovah*, all that he had promised to their Fathers, by the name of *El Shaddai* (u) : I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God ; and ye shall know, that I am *Jehovah* your God ; that bring you from under the burthen of the *Egyptians*.

This return from *Egypt* God had promised to *Abraham*, and confirmed it with an Oath(x), and to this purpose overpowered the stubbornness of this generation of ignorant slaves, by such miracles as they were not able to withstand ; and led them out by the hand of *Moses* into the wilderness, going before them by day in a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. And the more necessary was this Migration at that time, as the people were defiled with the

(r) See note (c) p. 702.

(s) *Gen.* xviii. 18, 19.

(t) *Ibid.* xii. 3. see *Sykes* on the *Hebrews*, Appendix, Number 1.

(u) *Exod.* vi. 7.

(x) *Gen.* xv. 14. *Deut.*

vii. 8.

Idols of *Egypt*; and would not hearken unto *Moses*, nor forsake the Idols of *Egypt*(*y*).

When *Abraham* left his Country, to avoid the Idolatry of the *Chaldeans*; he visited *Melchisedek*, King of *Jerusalem*; *Abimelech*, King of *Gerar*; and *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*: and all these were worshippers of the true God. But, while the *Egyptians* were in slavery, both *Egypt* and *Canaan* were corrupted with idolatry; and there was no other country to flee to, that had not imbibed the same errors. And indeed, the *Israelites* were now too numerous to think of residing under any other government; being sufficiently powerful to form a Kingdom of themselves: and accordingly the Angel, who had delivered them from *Egypt*, took them under his Protection in a particular manner; and became their God and King. He found them in a desert land, and in the waste howling Wilderness; he led them about, he instructed them, he kept them as the apple of his Eye. As an Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange God with them(*z*).

After this the same *Jehovah*, the Angel of the Covenant, made a Covenant with *Moses*(*a*);

(*y*) *Ex.* xx. 8.

(*z*) *Deut.* xxxii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

(*a*) *Ex.* xx. 22.

and

and did meet with him, and commune with him, and commanded, saying, Let them make me a Tabernacle, that I may dwell among them, and there I will meet with the children of *Israel*, and I will dwell among the children of *Israel*; and I will be their God; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God that brought them out of *Egypt*, that I may dwell among them; I am the Lord your God(*b*). So the Tabernacle, which is called the habitation where the Lord God, or supreme *Jehovah*, chose to put his name(*c*); and where his name, that is, the *Jehovah* Angel, was to dwell(*d*); was at the same time the Temple of our God, and the Palace of our King: And from thence he gave Answers to the Questions, which the high Priest asked him(*e*): and residing among us personally, and sometimes visibly, he gave us written Laws of civil Government and Religious Worship; fighting our Battles, as the Lord of Hosts; defending us and our Religion, and blessing us

(*b*) *Ex.* xxv. 8. xxx. 36. *Numb.* vii. 89.

(*c*) *Deut.* xii. 5. during this period there were occasional Revelations, and those Revelations were made by the ministring Angels: one of which was called the Angel of God's presence, whose name was in him. And by this ministry of Angels, God set up the mosaical State of Religion. Dr. *Jeffery* on II. *Tim.* iii. 15. p. 207.

(*d*) *Deut.* xii. 11. *Ex.* xxix. 45.

(*e*) See the manner of this Converse, *Num.* vii. 89. *Allix* on the Jewish Church, 225.

with fruitful Seasons and Victory over our Enemies, as long as we continued to obey his Laws, and carry-on the History of his Revelations to succeeding Generations.

Thus the great business of the visible *Jehovah*, for many ages till his coming as the *Messiah*, was to keep-up among the *Jews* the practice of Righteousness, and the memory of God's Providence and Prophecy; till he should be born into the world, and thereby become the *son of Man*; in which character he was to introduce a more perfect Revelation, and make a new Covenant with the house of *Israel*(f). Whereas, had the World been corrupted entirely with Idolatry before that time; the knowledge of the One God, and the history of his Providence and Supremacy and Superintendence over the affairs of Men, would have been entirely and *irrecoverably* lost; and the *Messiah* would neither have been expected, nor owned; nor any Signs have remained, by which he could have been known. Nay, had the World been corrupted so far, as to call down the wrath of God upon the whole Race of Man; the promise itself, that the *Messiah* should be born of the seed of the Woman, the seed of *Abraham* and *David*, must have failed Completion; merely by the wickedness of Man-

(f) *Jer.* xxxi. 31.

kind: and, together with it, the blessings he was to bestow upon all the families of the earth.

But, when God absolutely determines an End, he at the same time determines that Means shall not be wanting to bring it about; so that no obstacles shall prevent it. As Means to this End, at one time the whole World was destroyed except eight Persons; and at an other time they were scattered abroad over the face of the Earth; that so universal a destruction might no more be necessary, to prevent the contagion of evil Principles: but the several Nations be reformed, by delivering them for punishment into the hands of one another. And at length it was with the same end in view, that when Idolatry began to spread through all Nations, God chose a particular Family, among whom the Angel of his Presence tabernacled; and favoured them by him with a particular Revelation of all necessary Truth, which he propagated by their means through the several Nations of the World. And those who now hate and despise us, and are jealous of the peculiarity of God's favours to us; if they would but reflect, that the eternal Life of all Mankind depended upon *Messiah*; and the Birth of the *Messiah* required the continuance of the *Abrahamic* line, and afterwards of the line of *David*; would confess it to be most worthy of the divine Providence in so particular a manner to preside over our Nation,
for

for the benefit and salvation of the *whole* World; and to send us Prophets daily, rising up early and sending them; with promises of the highest Glory under him, when he should come to take upon him the Kingdom of *Israel*, and rule over all Nations; and the severest threats of ruin and destruction to those, who should refuse his Yoke; and to declare the *Place* of his birth, and the *Time* when they should expect him; that they might not be deficient in proper *evidence* of his Person, when he should appear among them to gather together again all Nations under one head, as their Lord and King; which had been so long separated from the *Israelites*, by the call of *Abraham*, and the Laws of *Moses*. And, as long as our People continued to practise Righteousness, and preserved the divine Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets faithfully, they were blessed with Prosperity; and, when they failed and followed other Gods, no nation was ever more severely punished. First, by *Shishac*, or *Sesostris*, King of *Egypt*; then, by *Joash* King of *Israel*; then, by *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*; afterwards, the Temple was spoiled by *Vagores* Lieutenant to *Artaxerxes Ochus*, upon the dissention of the High Priests; then, the City was surpris'd by *Ptolemy Lagi*; then taken and profaned by *Antiochus Epiphanes*; then, taken by *Pompey*; afterwards, destroyed by *Titus*; again, besieged by the *Romans* and destroyed

stroyed by *Severus*, in the reign of *Adrian* in the year of *Christ* 136, upon the revolt under *Bar-cochab*, with 50 Castles, and 985 towns of *Judæa*. In the mean time the Theocracy became by degrees less conspicuous, and almost impracticable; as the People became more and more corrupted, and unworthy of it. For when, by reason of their Sins, *Jehovah* turned their enemy and fought against them (g), they began to look upon the Gods of their Enemies not only as more powerful in themselves, but more propitious to their Worshipers, than the *Jehovah* who dwelt between the *Cherubim*. Thus *Abaz* sacrificed unto the Gods of *Damascus*, who smote him; and he said, because the Gods of the Kings of *Assyria* help Them, therefore will I sacrifice to Them; that they may help Me (h); and upon this account they gradually neglected to inquire of the God of *Israel* and his Prophets: So that it was next to impossible to carry-on the Theocracy any longer. And accordingly we find, a little before the destruction of the City and Temple (i) by *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Ezekiel* saw the vision of the glory of God, or the *Shechinah*, pass from his seat in the Temple to the threshold of the house (k); and from thence over the midst of the city (l), and from thence to the mountain on

(g) *Is.* lxiii. (h) *II Chron.* xxvii. 23. *Jos. Mede*, 668. (i) *Allix Jewish Church*, 247, 248. (k) *Ezek.* ix. 3. (l) *ver.* 18, 19.

the East(*m*). After this departure of the divine Presence, the Prophet saw the Temple forsaken, and the City destroyed, and the People carried into captivity(*n*). After this he saw no appearance of God, till their return from Captivity; when the Temple was rebuilt, and he returned again from the same mountain(*o*), and filled the house, as in *Solomon's* time(*p*). At length, after various turns and changes, in which we were sometimes raised to the highest pitch of grandeur and power, and sometimes depressed to the lowest distress and slavery, and again restored as a body politic to our religion and government, our City new built, and a new Temple erected; we were left, after the *Babylonish* Captivity, to be governed entirely, in the last period of time before the *Messiah's* advent, by the written word of God: which we had opportunities of studying and understanding at that time, better than we had before; our Scriptures being read in the Synagogue every Sabbath-day, our inclination to Idolatry quite cured, and innumerable Schools of polite Erudition erected under the *Maccabees*. And now the Spirit of Prophecy left us in the prophet *Malachi*, warning us to prepare by repentance and amendment of life for *Jehovah's* coming again to reside with us; that he might be a Blessing to us, and not a Curse. “Behold

(*m*) *Ezek.* xi. 23. (*n*) xxxiii. 21. (*o*) xliii. 2, 4,

5. (*p*) *I Kings* viii. 11.

says he, I will send my Messenger; and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, whom ye delight in; he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." And again; "Behold I will send you *Elijah* the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the heart of the Children to the Fathers; lest I come and smite the Earth [that is, the land of *Judæa*] with a Curse(*q*)."

These are the *last* words of the *last* of our Prophets; and these being claimed by *Jesus Christ* (*r*) to refer to *John* the *Baptist* and himself, connect the *old* Revelation with the *new* one; and prove the *Christian* Scheme to be only a continuance and farther completion of the original Design of God, to bring men to eternal Life by his Son, *Jesus Christ*, the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, the Lord of the Temple; who was foretold by the Prophets, (under the character of *Jehovah*; who led our Fathers out of *Egypt*,) that *He* should return and dwell with them, and make a new Covenant with them, and forgive their Iniquities, and remember their Sins no more(*s*). It is the completion of this prophecy, that begins the Christian dispensation;

(*q*) *Mal.* iii. 1. iv. 5. (*r*) *Mat.* xi. 10. *Mark* i. 2.
Luke viii. 27. (*s*) *Jer.* xxxi. 31, 34.

the Promise being literally fulfilled, when *Christ* appeared in the character of *Messiah*, the Son of Man and Prince of Peace; and forgave the Sins of all that believed in him: and it will be more fully accomplished hereafter; when he shall come to *reign over all*, and all *Israel* shall be saved; as it is written—there shall come out of *Sion* the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from *Jacob*: for this is my Covenant unto them, when I take away their Sins(*t*) (that is, their *Punishment*). It is remarkable, that *St. Paul* quotes this passage with respect to a future time, when all Flesh, that is, the whole *Jewish* Nation, shall be saved (*u*); and consequently it reaches to the second coming of *Christ*, or the end of the Dispersion; when that which is determined shall be poured upon the desolate(*x*), (our unhappy Nation;) and *Christ* shall appear to rule over all at the beginning of the (*αἰὼν μέλλον*) age to come, or age of the *Messiah*.

Thus through the whole history of our Nation, from the beginning till the coming of *Christ*; the Angel of the *Covenant* hath presided over us, as the Lot of his Inheritance (*y*): and it appears by the *Christian* prophecies, that he will *again* receive us into his favour upon our Conversion; and reign over us, even to the end of the world. But this return of the Theocracy

(*t*) *Rom.* xi. 25, 26, 27. (*u*) *ver.* 26. (*x*) *Dan.*
ix. 27. (*y*) *Deut.* xxxii. 9.

will not be, till he hath proved his Sceptre to be a Sceptre of Righteousness; by punishing in a very exemplary manner the iniquity of our Nation, and shewing that his Love and Regard to them will not prevail with him to forgive their Transgressions, when they rebel against him, and vex his holy Spirit(z).

2. I am now in the second place to consider; in what manner the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, when he came into the world in the Character of the Son of Man, did carry-on the same design of Man's Salvation; which he began at the Creation, and had continued to the End of the *Jewish* Dispensation.

And here it must be observed; that the Christian Dispensation differs from the *Jewish*, in these remarkable circumstances; First, in the gathering together again under one head(a), (the *Messiah*) both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; preaching Peace and Forgiveness to all, who would receive Him and enter into his Church and Kingdom. Secondly, in the completion of numberless Prophecies, which had been given in the preceding ages from the time of *Adam*; and Thirdly, in that it gained to the *Messiah*, as the reward of his Obedience, that Kingdom or purchased Pos-

(z) *Is.* lxiii. 10. *Deut.* iv. 30. *Hos.* iii. 4.

(a) This ἀνακεφαλάνωσις relates to the re establishment of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* into the same condition they were in before their separation; as appears by the preposition ἀνά.

session; which was prepared before the foundation of the World.

As the *Angel* of the *Covenant* had formed the *Jewish* Œconomy, by separating *our* Nation from the rest of Mankind, that they might not fall into *their* Errors; and governing them by such Laws, as should continue that separation till the *Messiah's* advent; who was to give new Laws to them, and to the whole world: So, in the character of *Messiah*, he formed the *Christian* Œconomy; by gathering together *again* all nations, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under *Christ* the one Shepherd and King over all; whose dominion was to be an everlasting dominion, never to be destroyed.

This Monarchy of the *Messiah* was the great point of view with all the Prophets, from the days of *Abraham*; and prophesied-of by *Jacob*, when he declares the Sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, till *Shiloh* come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the peoples (that is, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*) be(*b*). And this *gathering* was to be the beginning of the great Salvation, which was to be introduced by him; and is so called in opposition to the *Jewish* Peculiarity; because it was to extend over all nations, and last to the End of Time. And this is the PREDESTINATION, spoken-of in the new Testament, as the gracious

(*b*) See Letter IV. p. 510.

method of Salvation by Christ; when he should come in the Flesh: which was fixed and determined, according to the original design of God, to bring all the righteous to happiness by him, in the Kingdom which was prepared for them before the foundation of the world. For “this was the Mystery of *his* (God’s) will; according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together [again] in one [or under one head] all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are in Earth; even in Him in whom also we have obtained an Inheritance, being predestinated (*προορισθέντες*) according to the purpose of his own Will(*c*). A Mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of Men; as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit: viz. *That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body*, and partakers of his (God’s) promise in *Christ* by the Gospel(*d*).” Here we see the Apostle explains the Predestination he speaks-of, to mean the gathering of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* into one body *again*; which had been so long separated, by the call of *Abraham*, and the Law of *Moses*; and bringing them all under the same Revelation.

(*c*) *Eph.* i. 10.(*d*) *Eph.* iii. 5.

This then being the design of the *Christian* Revelation; that *Christ* might become a Light to the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*; and his Salvation extend unto the ends of the earth; and that the *Gentiles* should come to his light, and *Kings* to the brightness of his rising; God sent him into the world, to publish the Laws of Righteousness and Truth; and to preach Repentance, and Remission of Sins, to all such as would receive them, and live in the practice of them. And (according to the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, that he was formed from the Womb to be the Servant of God, to bring *Jacob* unto him, and to gather *Israel* (e);) he made the first offer of Salvation to his own People: being “a minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers (f).” Therefore St. *Peter* says, Ye are the children of the Prophets; and of the Covenant, which God made with our Fathers; saying unto *Abraham*, In thy seed shall all the Kingdoms of the earth be blessed: unto you *first*, God having raised up his son *Jesus*, sent him to bless you; in turning every one of you from his iniquities (g): and *Christ* himself says; I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel* (h); and orders his Disciples neither to go into the way of the *Gentiles*, nor to enter into any city of the *Sama-*

(e) *Is.* xlix.(f) *Rom.* xv. 8.(g) *Acts* iii. 25.(h) *Mat.* xv. 24.

ritans; but to go to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*(*i*). And, even after *Christ*'s death, the Disciples for some time continued to preach to the *Jews* only: but seeing that they put it from them, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal Life, they turned to the *Gentiles*(*k*). For so the Lord commanded them, saying; I have set thee to be a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayest be my Salvation unto the ends of the Earth(*l*). And his orders to them after his resurrection were; Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations(*m*). —So then the *Christian* Revelation was a continuation of the *Jewish* Revelation, and a completion of the promises given to our Fathers; and, if our Nation had received the *Messiah*, when he came to them, would have been carried-on by the Family of *Abraham*, and the nation of the *Israelites*. For he came to them as to his *Subjects*; being at that time their *King*, as he declared himself to *Pilate*; and therefore he had a right to their obedience. “And those among the *Jews*, who believed on him, were the Society over which he actually ruled; and all those who joined themselves to this Society, were his *Subjects*; or his Kingdom(*n*).” But, when he came

- (*i*) *Mat.* x. 5. (*k*) *Acts* xiii. 46. (*l*) *ver.* 49.
(*m*) *Mat.* xxviii. 19. See *Whitby*, Vol. II. p. 727.
(*n*) *Hoadly*'s answer to the Dean of *Worcester*, p. 112. see also p. 109. [II. 854. and 855. fol.] where is explained *Col.* i. 13. *St. Paul* thanks God, for having delivered Christians

came to his own, and his own received him not, he turned to the Gentiles; he was found of them that sought him not; and said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by his name(o). This then was the great business of the Messiah, under the Christian Œconomy, to collect together under one Lord, both Jews and Gentiles; and bring them to an obedience to the laws of his Kingdom. And as this Kingdom was to be extended over the whole world; and all people, nations and languages, were to serve him; it was absolutely necessary to put an end to those laws, by which our nation had been so long kept separate from others; and to introduce everlasting Righteousness (p); and govern his Kingdom, by the same Laws, by which the supreme God governs the Universe. And all such, as received the Laws of his Kingdom, became thereby the Subjects of his Kingdom. And as these Laws could only be received by Faith in Christ, or a belief that he came from God; it was upon the profession of this faith, that all their former sins were remitted. So that the moment they reconciled themselves to God,

Christians out of that Society [the power of Darknes] to which they belonged before; and from the power of Death, which ruled over it; and brought them, or removed them into another Society, over which his dear Son was truly King and Governor.

(o) *Is.* lxx. 1.

(p) *Dan.* ix. 24.

by

by receiving *Christ* for their King, and his Laws for the *Rule of their Conduct*; God did not withhold the free gift of Remission, because they had been formerly unfit, or because they might sin hereafter; but Forgiveness immediately follow'd their Faith, and could never after be forfeited but by Disobedience. But, if they do not endure unto the end, by an obedience to his precepts; they again *separate* themselves from God, and become again *at enmity* with him: and shall at the last day be cast out of his Kingdom (*q*); and be condemned with the wicked and impenitent of all other Religions: for this was the end, for which *Christ* gave himself for us; that he might redeem us *from all iniquity*, and *purify* unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works (*r*). Thus the whole body of the *Christian Church*, whether they were *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are *saved*; or brought together into a state of *Safety* (*s*); by the preaching of peace and forgiveness; as was foretold by the Prophets. And this is the only *Predestination* spoken-of in the new Testament; though some of the *Chris-*

(*q*) *Mat.* viii. 12. xviii. 32. (*r*) *Tit.* ii. 4.

(*s*) Thus *Noah* was *saved* in the Ark; and *St. Paul* received a Revelation, that no soul should *perish* in the Shipwreck. But this only mean'd, that they should have it in their power to be saved; not that they should be saved whether they would or no: and so enduring to the end is as necessary for *Christians*. See *Acts* xxvii. 22, 31.

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tians have deduced most absurd and unwarrantable Doctrines from it, by misunderstanding it. The word *Predestination* is mentioned, in the new Testament, only four times; twice in the eighth Chapter to the *Romans*, and twice in the first to the *Ephesians*: and in all these Texts relates to the bringing the *Gentiles* into the Church of God; and has never any other meaning.

The whole Process of the Salvation of obedient *Christians* by *Christ*, is thus briefly given us by St. *Paul*. [*Rom. viii.*] Whom God did *foreknow*(*t*), (those Generations whom God did intend to favour as he did the *Jews*, with a design to give them his Revelations, and make them his Church) he also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of his Son; [designing that he should instruct them, and be an example to them, that they should follow his steps.] And whom he did *predestinate*, [that they should be enlighten'd with the *Christian* Revelation, and become his Church;] them he also *called*; [he *called* them all together, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, into his Church; gathering them under one head, thereby putting an end to the *Jewish* Peculiarity:] and whom he *called*, them he also

(*t*) *Fore-know*] that is, *favour*. See *Amos* iii. 2. You only have I *known*, &c. and I *Cor.* xvi. 18. *Know* such; that is, shew Civility to them. *Hoadly's* answer to *Hare's* serm. p. 25.

justified

justified (u); [upon their obeying his Call, and becoming his Subjects, and joining themselves to him as his Disciples, he forgave them all their former Sins:] and lastly, whom he *justified*, them he also *glorified*. [All those, whose Sins were forgiven upon their first becoming *Christians*, he receives into Glory in his heavenly Kingdom.]

And here it must be observed; that the Apostle is not speaking, in this place, either of the Heathens who never heard of *Christ*; or of those *Jews* and Heathens who did not receive him, and obey his call; or of those who did not make their calling and election sure, by an obedience to his Laws; and enduring unto the End: but

(u) *Justified*] this word, as Mr. Robert Barclay observes, includes the whole between *calling* and *glorifying*. He quotes *Thysius*; the *Justification* seems to include *Sanctification*: and *Bullenger*; that in the Text, but ye are *washed*, *justified*, *sanctified*; the Apostle means the same thing in these several words: and *Chamierus*; that *Justification* and *Sanctification* do infer one another; yea, the Saints are for that reason called so; because they have received remission of Sins. *Barclay's Apol.* p. 220.

Mr. *Ainsworth* observes, on *Pf.* i. 1. that to make *just* or *justify*, is to *acquit* or absolve in judgement; *Pf.* lxxxii. 3. and to make or pronounce *wicked*, is to condemn. *Pf.* xxxvii. 33. xciv. 21. *Deut.* xxv. 1. So that the objections of Mr. *Chubb* and others to St. *Paul's* Expression in the Epist. to the *Romans*, that many are made Sinners; proceed from ignorance of the *Hebrew* Idiom. For the Sense of *δικαιῶν*, see *Gataker de Nov. Test. Stylo*; in Indice.

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only

only of the method or process, by which those *Christians* who *love God*, are led-on to Glory by him. For he gives this account, merely in order to prove and explain what he had advanced in the 28th verse; that “all things work together for good to those that *love God*; to them who are *called according to his purpose*; that is, to all obedient *Christians*: for those only can be said both to *love God*, and also to be *called according to his purpose*.

Here we see, the Peculiarity of *Election* and *Grace* (by which *Abraham* and his posterity were chosen, or elected by the *Angel* of the *Covenant* to preserve the history of God's Providence, when the rest of the world is generally imagined to be left without any Revelation;) still continues in the *Christian Church*; and is open to all, that have opportunity and a desire to enter into it. The great advantage of this Revelation belongs entirely to the *Christians*, and is thus expressed by *St. Peter*; that God, having raised up his Son *Jesus*, sent him to bless them; [to whom he preached,] by turning away every one of them from their Iniquities(x). And *St. Paul* informs us; that the Grace of *God*, which bringeth Salvation unto all Men, hath appeared [by *Jesus Christ*,] teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World;

(x) *Acts* iii. 26.

looking

looking for the blessed hope and appearance of the Glory of the great God, and our Saviour *Jesus Christ*; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good Works(y). Thus the *Christians*, who were contemporary with *Christ*, and heard his Doctrine; were delivered out of the power of Darkneſs, into his marvellous Light; out of heathen Ignorance and Superſtition, into the knowledge of the true God. And thus far did *Christ*, in the character of a Prophet, carry-on the ſcheme of Man's Salvation; by inſtructing them in Righteouſneſs, and making them fit and meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light.

But the benefits received by the *Revelation* of *Christ*, and the benefits received by his *Mediation*, are very different things(z). The *Mediation* of *Christ* relates to all the families of the earth: but his *Revelation* extends only to the *Christians*; and, even among them, not *one* has ever obtained eternal Life; by the knowledge of it. The *Christian* Revelation could no more give Life, than the *Jewiſh* Law: no man is ſaved, as an adequate Reward of his perfect Righteouſneſs, by means of either; but, as it was with the *Jew* and *Gentile*, when *Christ* came; ſo

(y) *Tit.* ii. 11.
ter VII.

(z) See this farther explained in Let-

it is with the *Christian* now: Every one having broken the Law, must depend upon the Mercy and Power of the Lawgiver. The Resurrection from the dead, forgiveness of Sins and eternal Life in the Kingdom of God and his *Christ*, are Blessings derived to us from another Cause, and by another Medium: which I shall now procede to consider and explain; by shewing,

Thirdly; that the *immediate* or *efficient* Cause, by which the Salvation of Man will be completed, will be the exercise of those powers which were conferred on *Christ* by the Father, in reward of his Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death. And this subject I shall explain under these four heads—

1st. That *Christ* came into the World, to do the Will of the Father.

2dly. That, in obedience to the will of the Father, he underwent Sufferings and Death.

3dly. That, in Reward of his Obedience, he was highly exalted; and received very extraordinary Powers.

4thly. That we are saved by the exercise of those Powers, which He receiv'd in Reward of his meritorious Obedience.

1st. I am to shew; that *Christ* came into the World, to do the Will of the Father. This very plainly appears, from the Testimony of *Christ* himself. He tells us, that he came not of *himself*; but the Father sent him: and neither
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the Words which he spake, nor the Works which he did, were *his*; but the Father's (*a*): for he did nothing *of himself* (*b*); but, as the Father gave him commandment, so he did (*c*); and gave his Disciples the words which God had given him (*d*): that he came in his Father's name (*e*), and did his works in his name (*f*); and fought not his own will, but the will of him that sent him (*g*): and came down from Heaven, not to do his own will; but the will of him that sent him (*h*): and it was his meat to do it, and to finish his work (*i*); and he *did finish* it in such a manner, as to glorify God by it (*k*); and by obeying his commands to abide in his Love (*l*). I must desire you to read the few chapters here quoted; and then to judge, fairly and impar-

(*a*) *Jo.* xiv. 10, 24. (*b*) viii. 28. (*c*) xiv. 31.
 (*d*) xvii. 8. (*e*) v. 43. (*f*) x. 25. (*g*) v. 30.

(*h*) *Jo.* vi. 38. If the Gospel be examined without prejudice or ill-will, we shall always find; that *Christ* ascribes whatever he said or did to the Father, as the Author and principal Cause; and calls himself the Servant of God, referring all things to his glory. In the first place, he expressly declares, that he was sent by God: and besides, the Miracles which he did, he does not ascribe to Himself; but to the power given him by the Father. And so the Doctrine, &c. Therefore, when he requires Faith in himself, he never declares himself to be the supreme God; but the Messenger of the supreme God: and that the Faith in him does not terminate in *Him*; but in *God*, by whom he was sent. *Limb. Amic. Collat.* p. 546, 547.

(*i*) *Jo.* iv. 34. (*k*) xvii. 4. (*l*) xv. 10.

tially;

tially; whether those, who explain away all the meritorious obedience of *Christ*, by a pretended equality between *Christ*, and the God of *Christ*; are not as much blinded by their prejudices, as any people in the world ever were.

2dly. In obedience to the will of the Father, *Christ* underwent Sufferings and Death.

Isaiab tells us; that he was formed from the Womb to be the Servant of God; to bring *Jacob* unto him (*m*): and yet, when he came into the World for that purpose, he was despised and rejected of Men; that it pleased God to bruise him, and put him to Grief; that he was cut-off from the land of the living, and poured-out his soul unto Death (*n*). And from the New Testament we find this Prophecy exactly fulfilled: viz. that he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel* (*o*); and was a minister of the Circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the Fathers (*p*); and came to them that were under the Law (*q*); and to bless them, by turning every one away from his iniquities (*r*); and to this purpose he went through *Judæa* and *Galilee*, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom in their cities (*s*): for to that purpose he was sent (*t*). And, in the faithful performance of this labori-

(*m*) *Is.* xlix.

(*n*) liii.

(*o*) *Mat.* xv. 24.

(*p*) *Rom.* xv. 8.

(*q*) *Gal.* iv. 4.

(*r*) *Acts* iii. 26.

(*s*) *Mat.* xi.

(*t*) *Luke* iv. 43.

ous work, he was continually subjected to the contradiction of Sinners; and was looked-upon as a Deceiver, and Impostor, and Sorcerer; and accused that he had a Devil, and did his Miracles by the Devil's power: and, what perhaps was spoken of him with as much malice, as any other blasphemy; he was called a *Samaritan*.

After some years spent in this manner, endeavouring in vain to gather into his Kingdom our unhappy Nation; he was not only rejected by the Elders, and chief Priests, and Scribes; but seized-on, as a Blasphemer, and a Rebel, and delivered-up to the *Gentiles*: He was mocked, reviled, derided, and in the most contemptuous manner buffeted, spit-upon, and crowned with thorns: denied by his Friends, betrayed by a Disciple; condemned, upon the evidence of false Witnesses, and by the sentence of a Judge who believed him innocent, to die the ignominious death of a Slave and be crucified, in compliance with the clamours of that very people he was sent to save; even his own Subjects, whom he had so carefully watched over for many ages, as the Lot of his inheritance. And indeed, the greatest sufferings *he* underwent, seem to have arisen the evening before his death, from the sense of *their* wickedness and obstinacy; and the latter end which was preparing for *them*, in consequence of it. His own condemnation he bore with Patience and Silence, and had frequently

quently spoken of it with great Fortitude and Resignation; but the Agony he felt in the garden was excessive; and if the prophecy of *Isaiab* (ch. xlix) relates to that part of his History; it seems to have arisen from a sense of the small Success of his Ministry, in gathering our unhappy nation into his church; and the ruin and destruction which his death by *their* hands would unavoidably bring upon *them*. This was an adequate subject for that vehemence of Prayer, which made him sweat as it were great drops of Blood; and use both Tears and Cries, when he offered-up his Supplications(*u*). For his mind was so torn with the foresight of our miserable destruction; that he suffered in a very astonishing manner: and an Angel was sent from Heaven, to strengthen him and enable him to support it; by the assurance, that, although *Israel* was not gathered, yet the benefit of his ministry should extend to the ends of the earth(*x*).

All

(*u*) *Heb.* v. 7.

(*x*) *Is.* xlix. 6. It is remarkable; that, both in the prophecy of *Isaiab*, and in the Evangelists, this event is represented in the evening before the *Messiah's* death: when his Labour was over, and he had (according to all appearance) spent his Strength for nought. [*Luke* xxii. 44. *Is.* xlix. 3, 4.] In both of them He desponds: [*Mat.* xxvi. 38. *Luke* xxii. 43. *Is.* xlix. 4.] And yet, notwithstanding this, he expresses his Faith and Resignation, and Readiness to go through with his Afflictions. [*Luke* xxii. 37, 44. *Is.* xlix. 4.] And in both he receives an answer from God, to encourage

All these Sufferings, and at last Death itself, were undertaken and completed; in compliance with the commands of God: and were indeed the foreseen and natural Consequences of his coming into the world, *as the Son of Man*; to reform the world, and fulfill the prophecies of bringing-in a new and better Covenant; by which the pleasure of the Lord was to prosper in his hand(y). And therefore these Sufferings were to be amply rewarded.

3dly. The *Messiah*, upon account, and in reward of his obedience and sufferings in performing the Will of God, was highly exalted; and received very extraordinary Powers.

The fundamental Prophecy of the *Christian* Religion is that of *Daniel* (z); that “the Son of Man came in the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all

courage and support him. [*Luke* xxii. 43. *Iy.* xlix. 5.] and *St. Paul* tells us, *Heb.* v. 7. he was heard ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας upon account of his Reverence †; and his particular Reverence was expressed in those words of Resignation to the divine Will, Not my will, but thine be done. And he was heard; in that the Benefits of his death were extended to the end of the earth.

(y) *Iy.* liii. 10.

(z) *Dan.* vii. 13, 14.

† See this sense of the word εὐλαβεία *Socr. Eccles. Hist.* i. xi. 38. *Edit. Cantab.*

people, nations, and languages shall serve him : his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion ; and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed :” and, according to this prophecy, the angel *Gabriel* declares to the Virgin *Mary* ; “ Behold, thou shalt bring forth a Son ; and he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest ; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his Father *David*, and he shall reign over the house of *Jacob* for ever ; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end(*a*).” But this Kingdom was not given to the *Messiah*, merely as a *benevolent* and *arbitrary* gift of an all-powerful Governor ; but in a *judicial* manner, in reward of his meritorious obedience ; as the *award* of a *just* and *impartial* Judge. It was, because the *Messiah* loved Righteousness and hated Iniquity, that his God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows (*b*) : It was, because he was so much better than the Angels, that he obtained by inheritance, a more excellent name than they ; being constituted the Heir of all things (*c*) : It was for the suffering of Death, that he was crowned with Glory and Honour ; says the Apostle (*d*) : as it was prophesied by *Isaiah* ; therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he poured-out his Soul un-

(*a*) *Luke* i. 32, 33.

(*b*) *Heb.* i. 9.

(*c*) i. 2, 4.

(*d*) ii. 8.

to death, and was numbered with the transgressors(*e*). It was, because he was made *a little while* lower than the Angels, that all things were put in subjection under his feet (*f*); and *Christ* himself saith, As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the *Son of Man* (*g*): that is, because he came into the world in that character spoken-of by the Prophets, and undertook to go through such humiliation and affliction, as they had foretold; in obedience to God who sent him. And the Apostle says, he made himself of no Reputation; (*ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτόν*) he emptied himself of that Glory which he had with God before the world was (*h*); and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Man; (who was before in *Shechinah*, *ἐν μορφῇ θεῶ*, in the form of God (*i*);) and being formed in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death; even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, that is above every name; that in the name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every Tongue should confess, that *Jesus Christ* is Lord; to the Glory of God the Fa-

(*e*) *Is.* liii. (*f*) *Heb.* ii. 8. (*g*) *Jo.* v. 26, 27.
(*h*) *Jo.* xvii. 5. (*i*) *Phil.* ii. 6.

ther(*k*). And upon the throne of *David* he shall reign, till he delivers-up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, from whom he received it; when he shall have put down all authority and power, that opposes it: for he must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet(*l*).

But the chief part of his Reward, in which Mankind is most immediately concern'd, is this; that God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to *Israel*, and remission of Sins(*m*), to be the Lord of quick and dead(*n*), to have life in himself(*o*), and to quicken whom he will(*p*), and to give eternal Life(*q*), and power to become the sons of God(*r*), and partakers with him in his Kingdom(*s*). It is manifest, these Powers were part of his Reward; because they are considered as the motives and reasons of his sufferings: for to this end *Christ* both died and rose and revived; that he might be Lord both of the dead and living (*t*): and God appointed us to obtain Salvation by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who died for us; that, whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with him(*u*). And therefore He is said to have *bought* Us with a Price (*x*); and We

(*k*) *ver.* 7. (*l*) *I Cor.* xv. 24, 28. (*m*) *Acts* v. 31.
 (*n*) x. 42. (*o*) *Jo.* v. 26. (*p*) v. 21. (*q*) *Jo.*
 xvii. 2. (*r*) i 12. (*s*) *Col.* i. 12. (*t*) *Re.* xiv. 9.
 (*u*) *I Th.* v. 10. (*x*) *I Cor.* vi 20. vii. 23.

are said to be *purchased* with His blood(y). And the Salvation of the World appears to have been the Joy that was set before him; for which he endured the Cross, despising the Shame(z). For this is the consolation given him by God, as I observed; when he is represented by the prophet *Isaiab*, in a desponding manner complaining, because he had gotten so few Converts. “I have laboured *in vain*, I have spent my strength *for nought*; but the Lord said, though *Israel* be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord; and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my Servant to raise-up the tribes of *Jacob*, and to restore the preserved of *Israel*: I will also give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*; that thou mayst be my Salvation unto the *ends of the earth(a)*.” The prospect therefore, that in him should all the families of the Earth be blessed; which was the pleasure of the Lord, that was to prosper in his hand (b); was considered by him as a Motive for his undergoing such a state of humiliation and affliction: and his Glory and Power of conferring Happiness was the Reward of it.

4thly. I am now in the last place to shew, that We are *saved* by the exercise of those Powers,

(y) *Acts* xx. 28. (z) *Heb.* xii. 3. (a) *Is.* xlix. 6.
Lu. xi. 32. (b) *Is.* liii. 10.

which

which *Christ* received in reward of his meritorious Obedience.

I have already observed, in my *fifth* Letter; that our first Parents were not only *subjected* to Death, but *condemned* to it, by God; as a *judicial* Punishment for Sin: and, consequently, no Being in the universe could have any right to restore them to Life; without his permission.

The Powers therefore, which were necessary to constitute *Christ* a Saviour, and bring Mankind to eternal Life and Happiness by him; were these—

First, the Power of raising the Dead:

Secondly, the Power of forgiving Sin:

Thirdly, the Power of giving Eternal Life—all which he received in reward of his obedience, when he became the Son of Man.

First, he had power given him to raise the dead. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; so the Son quickeneth whom he will(c). By this means *Adam* and all his Posterity, are reinstated in that capacity of being judged and rewarded at the last day; which they would have been in, had *Adam* never sinned; nor themselves. This Redemption from Death extends to *all* Men; as in *Adam*, *all* die; so in *Christ*, shall *all* be made alive(d): and this requires neither Faith, nor Works, nor any con-

(c) *Jo.* v. 21.

(d) *I Cor.* xv.

dition whatever, towards the obtaining it; but comprehends both good and bad. This Redemption from Death is the first step to our Salvation; and the necessary link in the chain, which joins the *present* to the *future* state; and extends to the recovery of what was lost by the sin of *Adam*; but it extends no farther: upon which account it may be justly asked; what will this Redemption avail us, at the day of Judgement? or what will be the advantage of a Redemption from Death; if, notwithstanding the benefits of a Revelation, in *many* things we offend *all* (e); and our Sins must therefore condemn us to a *second Death*?—

Secondly, It was necessary therefore; that *Christ*, in order to become a Saviour, should be endowed also with the Power to forgive Sin. And this goes-on farther towards our Salvation, than merely a Resurrection from the dead; and is called, by *St. Paul*, the *abounding* of the free gift of God: that is, it is not limited by any analogy to *Adam's* offence, for it is not confined to *one* offence, but extends to *many* offences, unto Justification and Forgiveness(f). This χάρισμα or free Gift, was absolutely necessary to our Salvation; because without it we should be in no safer a condition, as to *eternal* Life; than we were before *Christ* came. And therefore when *Christ* came in the character of a Saviour,

(e) I Cor. xv. 22.

(f) Ro. v. 15, 16, 17.

to gather both *Jews* and *Gentiles* into his Kingdom as a place of safety; he forgave the sins of all those who became his Subjects. For God raised him to be a Prince and a Saviour; to give Repentance to *Israel*, and Remission of Sins (g): and therefore Repentance and Remission of Sins were preached in his name among all Nations, beginning at *Jerusalem* (h); as was foretold by the prophets (i).

But the forgiveness of Sins to those particular Persons among whom *Christ* lived and preached, reached but to a very small part of Mankind; and fell far short of accomplishing the promise which was made to *Abraham*; that in his seed should *all the families of the earth be blessed*: and much more so, when we consider the many Sins which the best *Christians* were guilty of after such Remission. And therefore,

3dly, What compleated the character of *Christ*, as the Saviour of the World; and enabled him to perform this Promise, made to our Fathers; was the Power he receiv'd of judging all Men at the last day; and giving eternal Life. For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all judgement to the Son; and given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as He (the Father) hath given him (k);

(g) *Acts* v. 31. (h) *Luke* xxiv. 47. (i) *Acts* x. 43.
Jer. xxxi. 34. *Dan.* ix. 14. *Is.* liii. 12, &c. (k) *Jo.*
 xvii. 2.

that

that is, to all such as upon their future judgement shall be declared to be righteous; and placed at the right hand of the Son of Man(*l*).

Now all these things; raising the Dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal Life, are acts of *Power*; and of that very Power, which *Christ* receiv'd in reward of his meritorious Obedience; to enable him to compleat our Salvation. And it is upon this account, that the Gospel is said to be the Power of God unto Salvation; and Christ is said to be anointed with *Power*(*m*). For though he *gained* his Power, and *entered into* his Glory, by a State of *Humility* and *Sufferings*; for which he was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour: yet he *saves us*, as a *Conqueror* over Sin and Death(*n*); by destroying him, that hath the power of Death; that is, the Devil(*o*): (called the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Prince of this World, and the God of this World(*p*). And he saves us in his *Royal Character*, or that of a *King*; by giving us an inheritance in his Kingdom: and accordingly he is represented by *Daniel*, as receiving a Kingdom from the Ancient of Days(*q*); and by the Evangelists, as sitting upon the Throne of *David*(*r*): and as coming in the Glory of the Father, or in *Shechinah*, as in former days; dispensing Eternal Life to whom he

(*l*) *Mat.* xxiv. 31, 33. (*m*) *Acts* x. 38. (*n*) *I Cor.* xv. 54, 55. (*o*) *Heb.* ii. 14. (*p*) *II Cor.* iv. 4. *Eph.* ii. 2. (*q*) *Dan.* vii. 14. (*r*) *Luke* i. 27.

will, and destroying his Enemies with the brightness of his Coming. By all which it appears; that our Salvation is to be compleated by *Power(s)*.

Thus we see; in what manner *Jesus Christ*, the Angel of the Covenant, has been employ'd from the Beginning; in bringing all good Men to Happiness in that Kingdom, which he was about to purchase by his Righteousness; acting all along; according to the different circumstances of Mankind, sometimes as an *Angel*, and sometimes as a *Man*; sometimes revealing the Will of God by his Prophets, sometimes by his Angel(*t*), and sometimes by Himself in Person: At one time, forming a System of Laws to preserve the *Jewish* nation separate from the rest; at another time, gathering together again both *Jews* and *Gentiles* under Himself, as their Lord and King; and giving them Laws, more fitly adapted to his Universal Monarchy: divesting

(*s*) This account of our Salvation by *Power*, which Christ gained in reward of his Obedience, answers two very capital Objections of the Deists; Since God, say they, was *always* willing that *all* men should be saved by *Christ*; why was not his Revelation made *sooner*? and why was it not *universal*? And again; If *Christ* was sent into the world, to reform it; how comes it, that his Revelation has not that effect? and what good has it done, if *Christians* are as bad as other Men? For the answer to these Questions I refer the Reader to Letter VII.

(*t*) *Rev. i. 1.*

himself

himself of his natural Glory in Heaven, and humbling himself to appear among us as the Son of Man; refusing, for our sakes, neither Affliction, Contumely, nor Death: thereby gaining, in reward of his Benevolence, and Obedience, and Virtues of every kind, those powers; which were necessary to complete the character of a Saviour, and bring his faithful Subjects to eternal Life.—But here we must observe, that the Powers of *Christ* were the Rewards of *his* Merit; but the Blessings he bestowed on Mankind were not the Rewards of *our* Merit, but free Gifts. There is no doubt; but that, in the general method of God's Providence in the government of moral agents, as the Patron of Righteousness, and Judge of all the earth, the great Law must be; that Glory and Happiness shall be the reward of *personal* Merit: and thus the glory which *Christ* received was the proper Reward of his meritorious Obedience. But this is not the case with Men. *They* do not receive eternal Life, as the adequate reward of *their* Merit; but as the *free Gift* of an all-powerful and benevolent Creator and Benefactor; from which none are excluded, but those who are *unfit* to receive it. And farther than this the Mercy of God cannot be conceived to go, in the Salvation of Men; without mixing the good and bad together in the Kingdom of *Christ*: which would render it a place of unhappiness.

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From the whole we see, 1. that the Salvation of Man, and the whole Scheme of *Christianity*, is founded upon the *Benevolence* and *Love* of God; by which he was moved to send his Son into the World, with the offer of *free* pardon and forgiveness to all that would receive him, and become his Subjects; and to give him up to Death for our Sakes.

2. That it is carried-on by the Benevolence and Love of *Christ*; who gave himself for us, that he might bring us to Virtue and Happiness. It is impossible to conceive a greater instance of Benevolence and Love, than his Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death; in order to become *mighty to save*: or a greater Reward, than he received; which was the *Power to save*. A Reward, which could be perfectly enjoy'd by none, except a Person of the highest moral Excellence.

3. As the *Christian* Religion is founded on the Love of God, and carried-on by the Love of *Christ*; it is completed by the Love of Man to God and to *Christ*, and to one another. "In this is our Love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of Judgment; because as He, that is, *Christ* was, so are We in this World." In short, the great end of the *Christian* Revelation is to make us all *one* with God and *Christ*; that we may learn to act upon the *same* Principles of Benevolence and Love, and thereby pursue in a consistent manner, as *They* do,

do, the Perfection and Happiness of the Universe: for the Sum of all perfection in *rational* Beings consists, as I have before observed, in *unity of will and design* with God; who is infinitely wise, and just, and good. From all this it appears to Me; that the *Christian* Religion is the most glorious and interesting Scheme that can possibly be conceived, for the advancement of Virtue and Happiness; and worthy of all acceptance: and therefore I not only find myself obliged to receive it, and practise its Laws; but to recommend it to my Friends also: and particularly to yourself, whom I so greatly love and esteem.

It may perhaps after all be objected; that *God* is declared in the *Christian* Scriptures to be our Creator and Redeemer, and Saviour, and Justifier. And, if so, what need was there of any *other* Saviour, than God himself? what need was there, that *Christ* should suffer upon this account; or any other Person? why does not God elect, and justify, and glorify, by his own immediate act?

I answer; because it was not the design of *God* merely that good men should receive eternal Happiness; but that this gift should be conferred upon them in the wisest *manner*, and have the greatest *effect* among Men and Angels; in
promoting

promoting the Honour, that is, the most worthy Sentiments of God; and the cause of Righteousness. For God does not govern the World by *independent, unconnected, and arbitrary* acts of Power; but by a *consistent Scheme* of order and dependency of the parts: and the Redemption of Man is part of the great design; and tends to promote the natural Happiness and moral Perfection of the whole: and God carries-on this end and design, by the operation of his Creatures, so; that not only every Man in the world, but every Being in the Universe is employed; every one has some end in view, and some business to do; and the whole Universe is kept in action. Whereas to suppose, that God should, by his own immediate act, bring-about every event that he has decreed; is to leave no room for the actions of any other Being in the Universe. God *might*, no doubt, if he had pleased, have revealed his Will to mankind; without the intervention of the ancient Prophets: but where then had been the Office, Trial, and Reward of the Prophets? God *might* have created all Men, without the intervention of Parents; but where then had been the beneficial Connection between the Parents and Children? God does not act in so unconnected and short-sighted a manner; but makes one Cause serve several Purposes, by its various uses and connections:

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In *human* works, though labour'd on with pain,
A *thousand* Movements scarce *one* Purpose gain;
In *God's* *one* single does *its* *End* produce;
Yet serves to second too some *other* Use.

Pope, Ep. i. l. 54.

Of these *connections*, and the *uses* that arise from them, we frequently know nothing; and, when that is the case, our objections are mere Ignorance and Folly: but thus far we *do* know; that the Prophets had a *Trial* to go through, or a *Duty* to perform, and a *Character* to maintain; as well as the people they were sent to: that mankind were not only to be created, but created in such circumstances, as to employ and improve the virtues both of the children and parents; and connect the world in ties of relation and benevolence. And our Redemption was not confined in its consequences to the benefits of the Redeemed only; but extended to the Exaltation and Glory of the Redeemer, and to other uses.

'Tis certain; God can, if he pleases, bring about his decrees merely by his own immediate act and power: but where, and when, do we find this to be the method of his Providence? — When do we see his immediate hand in the establishment of Kingdoms, and the destruction of Armies? On the contrary, if he would destroy a nation, he raises up a *Pul* or a *Nebuchadnezzar*; if he would deliver it, he raises up a *Cyrus*; if he would shew his power in the punishment

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nishment of obstinate Infidelity, he raises up into a conspicuous station a *Pharaoh*: but it never appears, in the old or new Testament; that the supreme God, whom no eye hath seen or can see, ever acted *personally* in the affairs of Men, by his own immediate power; but as he made all things *by his Son*, so he performs all things *by Him*; or by some Angel who executes His commands(y). And the Reason, why God always chooses to employ the actions of other Beings, seems to be this; that by considering and executing his commands, they may improve their moral characters; and thereby recommend themselves to his Favour(z). And, if this be the case, we see the necessity of our Redemption's being effected by the mediation of a Saviour.

If it be asked; what necessity there was for the *Sufferings* and *Death* of a Mediator, in order to his becoming a Saviour; it may be answered, in general; that they were manifestly necessary to many great and excellent purposes. But whether they were so absolutely necessary, that he could not have been a Saviour without them; (by receiving the Power of raising the Dead, forgiving Sins, and giving eternal Life) even

(y) *Col. i. 15. John vi. 46. Heb. xi. 27. John iv. 12. I Tim. vi. 16.* See Letter II. p. 229, 230. Notes.

(z) In which sense it is, that *Christ* asserts; therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I may take it again. *John x. 17.*

though

though the *Jews* had received him as their Lord and King; is what we have not any evidence from Scripture to assert. But on the other hand; we cannot conceive any other way by which *Christ* could have received these Powers, as an act of Judicial Reward, except by Sufferings; and if that be true, his Sufferings must seem necessary to gaining such Powers, in such a manner, to consummate the most holy and perfect his Character.—If it be said, that they were necessary to fulfil the Prophecies; this is not a necessity in order to his becoming a Saviour, but in order to his fulfilling the Prophecies; and therefore is not the Subject of the present inquiry: for, if the *Jews* would have received him as their King, they would not have slain him; and, if they would not have slain him, these Prophecies would not have been given.

Let us examine what light we can find in the Scripture, in answer to this question. The end, for which *Christ* came, was in general to do the Will of the Father; and to finish his Work. He was to make a new Covenant with the house of *Israel*, and to gather *Jacob*; and to reconcile the World to God. And, if our nation would have received him for *Messiah* the Prince, and been gathered to him; it does not appear, from any thing in the new Testament, but that the end of his Mission would have been accomplished; without his Sufferings and Death: for they would not have slain him, if they had listened

to the voice of the Prophets; and known the day of their Visitation. And *Christ* himself, in his prayer the evening before his death, “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;” seems to consider it in this light: *viz.* that it might be *possible* for him to be the Saviour of the World, without his being slain by the *Jews*: for, in any other sense, if his death was *absolutely necessary* to his compleating that Office, he must seem to express a desire of abandoning it; which is highly absurd to suppose. And this sense of the words is confirmed by another prayer; in which he considers the work he came to do, as *already* finished; *before* his Death. “I have glorified Thee on Earth; I have *finished the work thou gavest me to do*: and now, O Father, glorify me, &c(a).” The Death of *Christ* therefore seems to have been rather necessary, in *attestation* to his divine Mission; as being the *faithful Witness* to the Doctrines which he preached to a sinful generation; and to manifest the Love of God to the World; in giving him up for us all, and other *consequences* of it: than any way necessary *a priori*, in the nature of the thing; as if his Death had been *absolutely* necessary to constitute him a Saviour and Redeemer, whether the *Jews* had received him as their *Messiah* and King, or not.

(a) *Rev.* i. 5. iii. 14.

Mr. *Foster* says, “the Death of *Christ* was undoubtedly predetermined by God; but that does not prove, that it did not happen in the *natural course* of things: that is, in the same Manner, and by the same kind of Instruments, as the death of other Prophets and righteous men, who have preached Repentance and Amendment to an ignorant and degenerate age(*b*).” And in another place he says; “his Suffering was the natural consequence of attempting to reform the manners of a degenerate age, and opposing the superstition and darling prejudices of the *Jewish* nation; and could not be avoided, but by such a compliance on his part; as would have been inconsistent with Virtue and Integrity: or by a miraculous interposition of Providence(*b*).

It is certain, says Mr. *Emlyn* (*c*); that “God never did appoint and order the *Jews* to shed *Christ*’s blood: but, on the contrary, forbade them to kill him. When he sent him among them, it was to turn them from their Sins; and the end he proposed was this, *Surely they will reverence my Son*. And therefore to shew how they acted against his Will: God censures those

(*b*) *Foster* against *Tindal*, p. 332, and 364.

(*c*) *Emlyn*’s Tracts. Examin. of Mr. *Leslie*’s last dial. p. 254. He observes; that the text, *Acts* iv. 27, 28. may be more properly translated thus: Both *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate* were gathered together against thy holy Child *Jesus*, whom thou hast anointed to do what thy hand and council determined to be done.

hands,

hands, as *wicked*, that killed him; and punished them with the most dreadful but illustrious Vengeance. *Mat. xxii. 37. Acts ii. 23.*” If God had *commanded* the *Jews* to slay him; it might have looked as if his Death had been so *necessary*; that his office of a Saviour could not have been executed without it: whereas by a bare *permission*, it was made to look like an *accidental* thing; done contrary to his Orders(c).—And indeed, to suppose it *necessary* that the *Jews* should slay *Him*; in order to bring about their *own* Salvation, and reconcile themselves to God; seems to require, that in order to gain forgiveness for their past Sins they must necessarily perpetrate another, of much deeper guilt than what they had before committed: And to suppose this to be any otherwise determined by God, than any other wicked action which he foretells; is inconsistent with his Attributes.

But though the Sufferings and Death of Christ do not appear *a priori* to have been so absolutely *necessary* to our Salvation, that he *could not* have been a Saviour *without them*; even though *Israel* had received him as their *Messiah* and King: Yet, as this was not the case, but on the contrary, his Death became the necessary consequence of his Ministry; the Beauty and Consistency of the divine Œconomy in suffering him to be slain, is very evident in the consequences

(c) *Ibid.*

of

of it *a posteriori*: and particularly, as it was by this extraordinary act of Benevolence, in giving himself for us all, that the World was to be reconciled to God.

In like manner; though we do not see *a priori* the necessity, that Mankind should be saved by one of their own Race; that, as by *Man* came *Death*, so also by *Man* should come the *Resurrection* of the dead; which *St. Paul* speaks of as a matter of great Propriety (*d*): yet this also, when considered *a posteriori*, in its Consequences, will appear to be no less beautifully connected with our Salvation; as a *Mean* and *Motive* to that End:—whether we consider him as our *Example*; increasing in Wisdom, as he increased in Stature (*e*); and living without Sin, though in the likeness of sinful Flesh (*f*); and learning

(*d*) *I Cor.* xv. 21. *Heb.* ii. 14. See Letter V. p. 614.

(*e*) *Luke* ii. 52.

(*f*) *Rom.* viii. 3. By what *St. Paul* says here, that in the likeness of sinful Flesh *Christ* condemned Sin in the Flesh, I understand him to mean; That *Christ* did prove Sin committed in the Flesh to be the proper Subject of Condemnation, by shewing that it was not the unavoidable Consequence of a Life in the Flesh: and this he shewed; by taking Flesh upon himself, and yet remaining free from Sin. *Heb.* iv. 15.—This was the opinion of *Clemens Alexandrinus*: viz. that *Christ* assumed Flesh, thereby to demonstrate unto Men their sufficient Power to obey the Commandments. See *Gale's Court of the Gent.* part iii. p. 131. *The Phoenix*, Vol. ii. No. 22. *Brevis Disquisitio*, ch. x. p. 337.

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Obedience, by the things which he suffered (g); and becoming perfect by Sufferings, that he might become the Captain of our Salvation, and lead many sons unto glory (h);—or whether we consider him as our *Judge*; touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and in all points tempted as we are;—or whether we consider his becoming a Man, only as analogous to the general method of Providence, that Mankind should be helpful to one another; and the Virtues of *Particulars* bring down Blessings upon the *Community*:—or as necessary in order to give *Evidence* to his Mission, as the faithful Witness even to Death raised up by God in attestation to his Doctrine;—in whatever manner we consider these things, the Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death of *Christ* appear to be *necessary* to our Salvation; in the same sense, as his whole Life and every part of his Conduct among us were *necessary*: that is, each Action was *necessary* to some particular purpose, by which God designed to bring-about our Salvation; and the whole together *necessary* to compleat all the purposes, that is, the whole Design, in that particular manner.—Give me leave to observe here upon the whole; what an amazing Idea we must have of the infinite Power and Wisdom of God; and what a demonstrable Proof of the infinite Folly

(g) *Heb.* v. 8. (h) *Heb.* ii. 10.

and Impotency of Sin: when we reflect, that so unpardonable an act of Wickedness as the crucifying the *Messiah* should be directed by almighty God to so great and glorious a *Catastrophe*, as the salvation of the World—If this be the case; how can we imagine it possible, that the Sin of Men, or of any Beings superior to Men, should ever be able to counteract His Designs! They may indeed produce a greater Intricacy in the Conduct of Providence; and such as may be beyond the finite Capacity of any Creature to investigate, because more complex; but the decrees of God will be equally accomplished, whatever means he pleases to make use of.

But here we are entangled for a few moments by an objection of the *Socinians*; with regard to the benefit of *Christ's* example. If *Christ*, say they, had not been a *mere Man*, but of a superior nature; he could not properly be proposed as an Example to *mere Men*. His Powers would be so greatly superior to his Temptations, that the *Weakness* of the Flesh would be absorbed in the Divinity; and the Remembrance of his former Glory being ever present to him, his Temptations could have no power over him: And therefore he can neither be a proper Example to us, by his Victory over Sin, to *labour* after Righteousness; which he preserved without any *labour*: nor an encouragement to imitate a

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Character, which we must despair of attaining-to.

To this it may be answered; that, when *Christ* is said to be an Example to us, it means; either that he was a *Warning*, *Admonition*, or *Lesson of Instruction*, to follow his Steps and receive his Reward; or else that he was a *Copy* for us to imitate, with the same Hopes in view.

Let us first consider; whether *Christ*, the Angel of the Covenant, be not a more proper Lesson of instruction to us, than any Man could be. As to the objection, that “the Weakness of the Flesh is absorbed in the Divinity;” it may just as safely be asserted, that the Power of the Divinity is absorbed in the Flesh: for as to the Consequence of the Conjunction of the Angel of the Covenant with the Flesh in which he was incarnate; or in what degree the Temptations of *Christ* might affect Him; that is, how easy or how difficult it might be for *Christ* to resist them: I presume we are intirely ignorant; and have no right to argue from *our* Ignorance against the Fact itself(*i*). All that we can safely

(*i*) Mr. *Emlyn*, in his answer to Dr. *Bennet*, tells him; that his Adversaries believed, that the *Word* emptied himself [of his great Glory] and became like the rational Soul of another Man; which is limited by the bodily Organs, and is in its Infancy as it were dormant; for by the settled laws of Nature it exerts not then its noblest Powers: so that the Man is at first like an Animal; and those powers
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safely assume upon this Subject, is this; that a Being of the most consummate Wisdom and Perfection did actually go through great Affliction, and Death itself, with Patience, Faith, and Resignation; and was rewarded by God in his time, for all that he did and suffered in obedience to his Will: and from these *Data* we argue, as follows.

1. If a Being so greatly superior to Man, in Wisdom and every Perfection, did actually divest himself of his Glory, which he had with the Father before the world was (*k*); and take upon him the Form of a Servant, and perform all the same Duties, which a Man is required to do,

and latent faculties discover themselves gradually, as the Organs admit: and probably never display themselves in all their full strength, in this gross and feculent body; nor till it is spiritualized and refined at the Resurrection. Now, according to this Opinion of the *Word*, which makes our Saviour's humiliation very astonishing and endearing, and which is the true and great mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh; it will be easy for them to admit the *Word* to be deprived of its former extraordinary Abilities, and to become subject to sore Temptations and great Afflictions in reality; also to grow in Wisdom, as others do; though at the same time it did conduct his actions, and something very extraordinary too appeared in him at Twelve Years of age, (even before his great Union with the Holy Ghost) when he reasoned so wonderfully with the *Jewish* Doctors; so that it acted as the bodily organs admitted. *Emlyn's Tracts. Vol. II. p. 183.*

(*k*) *John xvii. 5.*

in obedience to his Will; It is a lesson of Instruction to us; that no Being, let him be ever so great and wise, is superior to the practise of the same moral Virtues which we are obliged to; or to a state of Humiliation, when ever it may be agreeable to the wisdom of God to allot it to him: And consequently, that the practise of Righteousness, and submission to the Will of God by a perfect Obedience, are agreeable to the highest Wisdom and Rectitude; and ought to be practised by all inferior Beings, who would aim at a praise-worthy Character, by a right and wise Conduct.

2. As the supreme God of the Universe did appoint a state of Affliction and Death to be gone through by so great and good a Being, as his own beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; it is a sure Indication and Lesson to us, that whom God loveth he chasteneth; and an Encouragement to bear with Patience whatever Afflictions we ourselves may suffer; considering them as the appointments of a wise and good God, and tending to wise and good purposes.

3. As in recompense of *Christ's* Obedience, he was highly exalted and rewarded; this is a lesson of Instruction to teach us Faith and Confidence in God's Justice and Bounty; that if We
suffer

suffer with *Christ*, we shall also be glorified together(*l*).

But, if the *Socinian* considers this Example, merely as a Copy for our Imitation; and imagines, that, if *Christ* had never existed in a state superior to Man, he would be a more proper Copy for our imitation: he must consider it either as more *easy* to imitate in such a case,—or as more *likely* for us to choose it for our imitation,—or as a greater *Encouragement* to our imitation, because we should have a better prospect and hope of coming up to the perfection of the Copy. To which it may be answered;

1. The Example or Copy could not be more *easy* to imitate; because it is the same Copy, under both suppositions; whether the Person who set it us be a *mere man*, or superior to a man; and, where the Copy is the same, the Difficulty of imitation must be the same.

2. The Example of a *mere man* would not be more *likely* for us to choose for our imitation, than the Example of a superior Being. For, the more perfect any Being is, the more we think to please God by the Imitation of him; and the less perfect he is, the less good we can promise ourselves by being like him.

In the Imitation of a *mere man*, we must be often full of doubts; whether the Example be

(*l*) I *Pet.* ii. 19, 21. *Rom.* viii. 17.

fit for Imitation : But, in the Imitation of the Son of God, we are under no such difficulty ; the belief of his superior Nature being an assurance to us, that it is a Copy fit for the Imitation and Improvement of Man ; for that very reason, because it is set us by a Being of Wisdom and Perfection infinitely superior to Man.

The *Socinian* may perhaps reply ; that we can have no doubt of the Perfection of the Copy set us by Christ, though he be a *mere Man* : For this mere Man was filled by the Holy Ghost, and God gave not his Spirit by *measure* unto him ; and therefore *His* Example may be well concluded to be faultless and without Spot. It is true : but, if this be the case, it comes under their own Objection ; for a Man *so* helped and assisted by a supernatural Power of the Spirit without measure given unto him^(m), is no greater Encouragement to *us* to hope for Success in our Renitency against Temptation, who are not so assisted ; than if he were a Superior Being, and partaker of the divine Nature.

3. But, in truth, the whole of this objection arises from the Mistake of imagining no Example is fit for our Imitation ; but what we are able to come up to : an objection which may be made to several other Texts of Scripture upon the same Mistake ; as when we are commanded to be

(m) *John* iii. 34.

followers of God, as dear Children (*n*); and to be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect (*o*).

When *Phidias* and *Apelles* set before their Scholars Copies for their Imitation and Improvement, they did not choose-out those that were most faulty; but those which were most perfect. These the Scholars were to imitate, as well as they could; and their Masters, not Themselves, were the proper Judges of their Improvement; whereas a faulty Picture or Statue would have led them into Errors, and a perfect one was chosen to lead them to Perfection by degrees. And upon this account it is; that no other Being has ever yet appeared in the World, that could be exhibited as a perfect Exemplar; but *Christ* alone. Nay, even the *ideal* portrait of a perfect Man, which was drawn by the *Stoicks*, was greatly defective in many particulars; in some, it was carried far beyond the Life; in others, it as much fell short of it. It appears therefore; that this Objection of the *Socinians* is rash, and without Foundation.

If it be asked; why *Christ* was the *particular Person* chosen by God, rather than any other, to be the Mediator between God and Man and sent upon the gracious message of Pardon and Forgiveness, and ordained to undergo Pain and

(*n*) *Eph.* v. 1.

(*o*) *Mat.* v. 48.

Death

Death for our sakes—the reason appears to be ; because he was more intimately *related* to us, and more nearly *concerned* in our Welfare, and consequently in our Salvation ; than any other Being in the Universe could be : for we were created *by* him, and *for* him. There is one Lord *Jesus Christ*, says the Apostle ; *by* whom are all things, and we (διὰ) *by* him(*p*). We are therefore the work of his Hands ; and consequently, the natural objects of his *Care* and *Love* ; for it is impossible to conceive a nearer and dearer Relation. But this is not all ; we are not only created *by* him, [δι' αὐτῆς] but *for* him ; [εἰς αὐτὸν] being chosen *in* him [ἐν αὐτῷ] before the foundation of the World, to inherit his Kingdom(*q*) ; to be joint heirs with him in his inheritance(*r*), which he hath purchased ; and there to live and reign with him(*s*), and be glorified together(*t*). By reason of which intimate connection he calls us his Brethren, and his Children whom God hath given him(*u*), parts of the same Building(*x*), members of the same Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones(*y*)—It is upon account

(*p*) I Cor. viii. 6.—Col. i. 16. εἰς αὐτὸν is explained to signify the *final* Cause, by *Valla* and *Erasmus*—*in respect of him*, that is, that he might rule over them ; by *Vatablus*, *to his Glory* ; by *Piscator*, *Beza*, &c. *by* him, as the Cause ; and *for* him, as the End ; says *Whitby* ad locum.

(*q*) Mat. xxv. 34. (*r*) Rom. viii. 17. (*s*) II Tim. xi. 12. (*t*) Heb. ii. 2. (*u*) ii. 11, 13. (*x*) Eph. ii. 14, 15. (*y*) Eph. v. 30.

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of this *love* and *regard* to us, that God hath particularly chosen *Him* above all other Beings to be our Prince and Saviour, to bring millions of his Creatures to glory and honour and immortality, and make them partakers of the divine Nature(z): to die no more, but to be equal to the Angels and Children of God(a).

No other Being therefore do we know-of, who was so proper to be sent into the World for our Salvation, as *He*; no *other*, who would be so faithful a Mediator, or so indulgent a Judge; no *other*, who would with such unbounded Benevolence dispense the free gift of eternal Life to all, who should be meet and fit to receive it; and save to the uttermost all such as should come unto God by him: no *other*, who would look upon *our* Salvation as a Reward done to *himself*; and a Joy that was set before him, and a Recompense and Satisfaction of all his Labours, Sufferings and Death: And, what is of the highest consequence to be considered, there is no *other* Being in the Universe, that we know-of; who by his meritorious Obedience hath gained an everlasting Kingdom, and purchased a possession by his Merits, which he hath power and desire

(z) II Peter i. 4.

(a) Luke xx. 36.

to bestow upon us; nor any *other*, capable of gaining such a reward; or of sufficient Benevolence to have gone through such difficulties to obtain it for us.

But the consequences of *Christ's* mediation, as I have already hinted, are not confined to Mankind alone; as if *they* only were advantaged by it, and the Salvation of Mankind by *Christ* were unconnected with the Government of the Universe: for *all* intelligent Beings, who are acquainted with the history of his Abasement and Exaltation, are instructed by it in the *same* Principles; and actuated by the *same* Motives. Even the holy *Angels* have here an Example before them, most worthy of *their* Study and Imitation; and sufficient to confirm *them* in the constant practice of Faith and Obedience. For though some of them have formerly fallen from Righteousness, and kept not their first *estate*; who are reserved unto the judgment of the great day (c): yet the history of *Jesus Christ* is of itself
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(c) *Jude*—6. Some *Christians* read the Text of *Deut.* xxxii. 8. according to the version of the *Lxx.* where it runs thus: When the Most High divided the Nations, when he separated the Sons of *Adam*, he appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the *Angels of God.* And they understand the Text of *St. Jude* of those

sufficient to prevent any farther Apostacy among them for the future. Here they experience the *Righteousness of God* clearing itself, from the most intricate and unaccountable Appearance of *suffering* Excellence and *successful* Malice, in a method beyond their Conception; and yet in a plain and intelligible manner, when revealed; agreeable to the analogy of his Government in other cases: Here they find an example in *Jesus Christ* of an absolute Faith and Dependence on God's Righteousness, and a persevering Obedience unto the end, under amazing Difficulties and Afflictions, and all Infirmities of the Flesh; raised and rewarded by God, in his own determinate time and manner, to a state of the highest Glory: all the malice and power of his enemy being reduced into subjection under his feet. To see the Pride and Wickedness of the subtle and powerful, thus conquered by the humble Obedience and Righteousness of the truly wise, is sufficient to manifest in fact, (which is the strongest and most prevailing argument possible;) that, however intricate the circumstances of things may appear to the imperfect view of Men or Angels; yet Faith in God, and Obedience those Angels, who did not take a proper care of their particular Districts.

dience to his Commands, will certainly at last surmount all Difficulties; and personal Merit meet a sure Reward. And thus through the whole Creation, wherever this history shall be known, not only among Men, but also among the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places(*d*), who were formerly desirous to look into these Mysteries (*e*); it will influence them with a more prevailing Faith and Steadiness to worship and obey the King of Heaven; all whose works are Truth, and his ways Judgement; and those who walk in Pride he is able to abase(*f*).

I have now fully considered the three Propositions, which I intended to examine in this Letter; and proved them to be the Doctrines of the new Testament, agreeable to the Nature of God and Man, and to the former Revelation given to our Fathers: and I imagine by so doing I have sufficiently apologized for my present Faith. Nothing remains to complete my Design, but only to explain some few Texts of Scripture which have been misunderstood; and obviate some few Objections to the *Christian* Scheme. But these are more properly post-

(*d*) *Eph. i. 9.*

(*e*) *I Peter i. 12.*

(*f*) *Dan. iv.*

poned to another Letter, by way of Appendix; than suffered to interrupt the Course of the Argument in these, which I have already gone through.

End of the SIXTH LETTER.

posed to another letter by way of Appendix,
then inserted to interrupt the Course of the
Argument in this, which I have already gone
through.

End of the Sixth Letter.

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

But this I confefs unto Thee; that, after the way which they call *Hereſy*, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers: believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets. *Acts* xxiv. 14.

IN my fifth Letter, when I was conſidering the opinions of *Grotius*, *Stillingfleet*, and others; viz. that God *could not* forgive Sin, except the Son of God ſhould ſuffer as a Sacrifice for the Expiation of it, by undergoing the Punishment which the Sin deſerved; I examined the Doctrine ſo far, as to ſhew; that God has the *Power*, conſiſtent with his *Juſtice*, of remitting entirely the puniſhment of the Sinner, of his own *free Grace*: which was all that the ſub-
ject

ject I was there considering required(*a*)—But whether the passing-over the punishment of the Sinner, was to be brought-about by *transferring* it upon the head of an *innocent* Person; was left to be considered afterwards—There are some other subjects, besides this, which I have touched upon in my former Letters; but could not sufficiently explain, as I went along, without taking-off your Attention to the main argument by such long digressions: I shall now therefore consider them all together; and so make this a Letter of Dissertations upon various subjects.

I have already proved(*b*); that Guilt is entirely *personal*, and inseparable from the Agent; and cannot possibly descend from one Person to another: and that Punishment cannot extend beyond the Guilt, without Injustice: and consequently, the Punishment due to *Adam* could not extend, *as a Punishment*, to his innocent Posterity. But the doctrine I was then exposing, *viz.* the Injustice of punishing the Innocent for the Sins of the Guilty, must be here discussed more fully; because the state of the Question with regard to the Sufferings of *Christ*, is a little different from that of punishing *Adam's* Posterity: and Bp. *Stillingfleet* has laid it in the fairest light it is capable of, by considering it as undergone *voluntarily* and by *choice*; which is

(*a*) See *Whichcote's* Aphor. 268, 276, 536, 701, 739, 1002, &c.

(*b*) Letter V.

not supposed to be the case of *Adam's* Descendants.

His words, which I have before quoted, are these: "that, notwithstanding his Innocency, a person may oblige himself, by some act of his own Will, to undergo that Punishment, which *otherwise* he did not deserve; which Punishment, in that case, will be *just* and agreeable to Reason(c)."

This I shall shew to be a Mistake; though I must confess, after the *Christians* had formed a notion, contrary to Scripture; that the sons of *Adam* were to be punished for the Sin, which *He* had committed before their Existence; they could scarce avoid supposing, that another Person should be punished for the Sins which they commit *themselves*: for it would be hard to punish them for *both*. But, what good can accrue, from punishing the *wrong* person, rather than the *right*; the *innocent*, instead of the *guilty*; does not appear very clear: Nor does it appear, that any Thanks are due from me to a Judge; who forgives me a Sin, that I did not commit. Moreover, as no Being in the Universe is more merciful than God himself; if any one hath interceded with him to forgive, where God himself was *unwilling* to do it; such an Intercession must be improper, and betray an Error in Judg-

(c) *Stillingsfleet* on the Sufferings of *Christ*, folio, 303. oct. 397.

ment: and it must be highly derogatory to the perfection of God to comply with it. And therefore I dare not suppose, that *Jesus Christ* did ever petition for any thing; which God was not as willing to grant [*δωρεάν*] freely or *gratis*, as the Intercessor was to intercede for it *gratis*: nor that the Intercessor would think of shewing Mercy, where the Supreme Being saw fit to be severe: Much less could it be possible; that the God of all Mercies should require an Equivalent or Payment, for an act of Mercy; which *Christ* was not only desirous that we should receive, but willing to go through great difficulties and distresses to procure for us; even so far as to pay the Debt, or undergo the Punishment himself: For, in such case, as Dr. *Clarke* observes; “no Acknowledgment is due to Him, to whom the debt is paid; but to Him that paid it(*d*).” Nor is it possible that God should require of *Christ* to pay a debt, which was not due from Him; or receive it, if it could be offered. But above all Conception it is most contrary to the divine Attributes, that God should be so desirous of Punishment, which he calls by the prophet his Work, his *strange* Work; his Act, his *strange* Act(*e*); as to inflict it upon the *best* of Beings: choosing the most *improper* Person in the Uni-

(*d*) *Clarke's* sermons; octavo, Vol. i. 305.

(*e*) *Is.* xxviii. 21. *extraneum factum suum, alienum opus suum.*

verse to punish, as being the best beloved by him, and the most perfect; rather than not inflict it upon some one. All these absurdities follow from the notion, that *Christ* was *punished* for the Sins of Man; in the sense, in which a *guilty* person is *punished*: and there is no other proper meaning to the word. And yet this is the opinion held among some *Christians*; though there is not a single word of the Guilt of *Christ*, or his Punishment, in the whole new Testament; and all these difficulties may be avoided, by adhering to the words of Scripture; and distinguishing what it *does* say, from what it *does not* say, that is, that he *suffered* and *died*; whereas it never says, that he underwent any *Punishment*.

Now, though the difference between these be very remarkable; yet, as it serves some Ends to confound them, and particularly as it gives an opportunity to the Deist(f), to make the *Sufferings* of *Christ*, under the Idea of a *Punishment*, appear *inconsistent* with the divine Justice; it may be necessary to shew, wherein they differ.

And 1. Suffering may be the natural Effect of matter and motion, without any act of Volition; as when a House falls, and thereby a Person breaks a limb, or loses his life. But Punishment is the act of a *reasonable* Being, founded upon an *act of Judgement* and *Condemnation*.

(f) Clarke's sermons; Vol. I. p. 305. Octavo.

2. Punishment or Reward *finishes* and *compleats* the whole that is due to every moral Action; whether it be worthy of the one, or the other.

3. When an action deserves Affliction; and the Agent in consequence of it, is by a *judicial* act condemned to suffer, as he deserved; and all that was *due* to him upon that account, is compleated, so that there remains no *debt* or *demand*; such an Affliction is properly a Punishment. But,

4. When a Person suffers an Affliction, which was *not due* to him; or which he did *not deserve* to suffer by any bad action: or when he has received an *excess* of Affliction, *above* what his Actions have deserved: in these cases, there remains to be paid a *Recompense*, in order to balance the account between what he had *deserved*, and what he had *received*; nor can the account be fairly settled, till that recompense be paid; and the recompense itself balances the account, and there remains no debt or demand on either side: such an affliction, or such an excess of Affliction, where a recompense is due, is not properly a *Punishment*; but only an Affliction or Suffering.

He therefore, that has a just expectation of Reward, in recompense for his sufferings, cannot properly be said to be *punished*; but only to be *afflicted*, or to *suffer*. And this was plainly the case of *Christ*; who, to this end, both died
and

and rose again and revived, that he might be Lord both of the Dead and Living: who, for the Joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the Shame; and is set down at the right hand of God.

In short, Punishment is inconsistent with a Recompense; because it is itself the recompense and balance of the account: which is the case of the criminal, who suffers the Law; in whom it would be ridiculous and absurd to expect to be rewarded for his Sufferings. But Suffering, when distinguished from Punishment, is the fate of every one; who undergoes pain, or labour, or trouble of any kind, upon any account but that of Guilt. And therefore, as I argued before, with regard to the posterity of *Adam*; so I argue now, with regard to Christ.

If God is just, he will not extend the Punishment beyond the Guilt; for, if he does, he punishes the Innocent: And, as *Guilt* is *personal*, and *inseparable* from the agent; (for no one can be guilty of an act, in a proper sense, but he that committed it;) it cannot be *transferred* from one Person to another; and consequently, neither can the *Punishment*: and therefore *Christ* could not be punished for *Us* by a *just* God; because *He* could not be *guilty* of *our* Sins. And, if neither *Christ* is punished, nor the *Criminal*; the *Sin* is not *punished*, nor the *Law* of God *vindicated*. For Sin in itself is an abstract Idea.

Abstract

Abstract the Sin from the mind of the Sinner, and it becomes an indifferent Action: It has no existence, but in the obliquity of the Sinner's mind; and is in itself incapable of Reward or Punishment. Sin can in no sense be punished, but by the Sufferings of the Sinner: If any other person suffers punishment for it, he suffers unjustly; because unconnected with the Guilt.

Now if the Punishment of the *Sin*, be understood to mean the Punishment of the *Sinner*; (which is the only sense it is capable of:) then the Argument, that *Sin* must necessarily be punished, that the Laws of God may be vindicated; will extend farther than is intended by those who use it: for it will prove the necessity, that the *Sinner himself* should be punished: and then a *Substitute* can be of no use at all(g). For nothing can be more absurd and inconsistent; than to suppose it necessary, that the Laws of God should be vindicated by the Punishment of the Sinner; and yet the Sinner should be allowed to escape unpunished.

But what seems to be no less extraordinary, is the Conclusion which is drawn from this *Hypothesis*; that God's hatred to Sin is best shewn, and the honour of his Laws best vindicated, by such a Substitution: which is the same thing, when translated out of sophistry into common

(g) See the quotation from *Gale*; Letter V. p. 651. viz. part IV. chap. vi. § i. p. 369, 370.

sense, as to assert; that God's hatred to Sin is best shewn by forgiving the Sinner; and his love of Righteousness, by punishing the Righteous: or that God's Laws are best vindicated by punishing an *innocent* Person, who hath never transgressed them; for the sake of saving a *Transgressor*, who deserved to be punished for the breach of them. And all this absurdity depends upon the sophistical notion; that the *Sin* is to be punished, and not the *Sinner*; which, if ever so true, would serve to no manner of purpose in restraining Vice; since if once the *Sinner* was satisfied, that He should get clear from *personal* Punishment; he would not be likely to concern himself what would become of the *Sin*.

And the Injustice of punishing an *innocent* Person cannot be evaded, as Bp. *Stillingfleet* and other learned men have imagined; by saying that *Christ* underwent a *voluntary* punishment: because, whether voluntary or involuntary, unless it can be proved, that the punishment was *just*, and what he *deserved*, (which could not be, because he was *innocent*); it is only asserting, that an *innocent* Person submitted *voluntarily* to an *unjust* Sentence; and his *voluntary* submission to it made it *just*: which it is absurd to suppose. And yet Dr. *Stillingfleet* has expressed himself, as if he would have us understand him in this sense: for he says; "He may oblige himself, by an act of his own Will, to undergo that Punishment;

nishment; which *otherwise* he did not deserve. But how does his Submission to it make him *deserve* it? This is what can by no means be proved: For nothing can make him *deserve* it, but personal *Guilt*. The patient Resignation of the Sufferer has nothing to do with the Sentence of the Judge. The whole question before him is, only whether the Culprit be *guilty*, or not *guilty*; and, if he condemns the *innocent* to suffer punishment, his Sentence is *unjust*.

Dr. *Samuel Clarke* says (*b*); Though to punish an *innocent* Person instead of the *guilty*, is evidently *unjust*; yet to *permit* an innocent Person to take it [that is, *punishment*] upon himself, is by no means so. And Bp. *Stillingfleet* says; that a Person, notwithstanding his innocency, may *oblige himself*, by an act of his own, to undergo Punishment. So that, according to Dr. *Clarke*, God only *permits* Christ to suffer; and, according to Bp. *Stillingfleet*, *Christ obliges himself* to suffer. Be it so; but where are we now? Is not the question entirely altered? If this be the truth, it is not God who punishes *Christ*, but *Christ* who punishes *himself* by God's permission. And then, where is the necessity of God's vindicating his honour to the World; if he only *permits* it to be vindicated? On the other hand; how can it be

(*b*) Sermons, Vol. viii. p. 373, octavo; Vol. I. Serm. exxxvii. p. 142. fol.

said,

said, that God has the Power to forgive; if the Forgiveness depends upon the Will of another Person? This Supposition destroys both, his *absolute* and *ordinate* Power (i): for, as *John Fox* tells us, in his Sermon at *Paul's Cross* (k); "Cause for Christ to die, there was not; as his Life was innocent, so there was no Law to condemn him. No; neither his Father, salving his justice, could lawfully enforce him; only his own good will, and obedience to his Father's will; and none other." Besides does the Scripture ever use such Language? did God only *permit* Christ to come into this world and die; or did he come, because the Father *sent* him?

As to what Dr. *Clarke* supposes, that *Christ* might take the punishment upon himself; If he means, that *Christ* could consider it as a *punishment*; it is impossible: for he knew himself to be innocent; and that the punishing the innocent would be an abomination, in the sight of God; because unjust. Why then will not the *Christians* clear themselves of these difficulties, by keeping close to the words of Scripture; and declaring, that he *suffered* for *us*; or that he *suffered* for *our Sins*, the just for the unjust; in which there is no difficulty? For he, who voluntarily undergoes any Affliction to save a *guilty* person, can no more be said to be *punished* for

(i) See Letter V. p. 651.

(k) Page 49.

him; than if he underwent the same Affliction, to save an *innocent* one: the act being the same, in both cases: And yet he may be said to have *ransomed* him, to have *sacrificed* his life for him, and to have *redeemed* him by his blood; (if he *died* in the cause; whether the person, for whose sake he suffered was innocent or guilty :) but he cannot be said to be *punished* for him; because Punishment supposes Guilt in the person who suffers. Nay, though he should judge himself to be *guilty*; (which he must do, if he submitted to suffer as a Punishment;) the truth would be, that he had passed a false judgment upon himself: which would give no right to any one to punish him, who knew his Innocence. In short, it is impossible that *Christ* should consider himself as *guilty*; and consequently impossible for him to believe his *Sufferings* to be a *Punishment*; (and it is plain, that he *did* not; because he suffered with a *Reward* in view; which is inconsistent with the nature of *Punishment*;) and it is impossible that God should punish him; because he was without Spot, at the very time he suffered Death.

It is worth while to observe; how this Doctrine of his punishing *Christ* for our Sins, hath been altered, and softened, and given-up, inch by inch. The learned *Theophilus Gale*, speaking of God's *absolute* Justice, says; by this *absolute* Justice and Dominion God can inflict the greatest

est Torments, even of Hell itself, on the most innocent Creature; and he quotes *Suarez*, saying; we must allow that God, as supreme Lord, can inflict on an innocent Man all that evil that is in the Torments of Hell: and *Gale* adds; that God did *de facto* inflict the highest Torments on an innocent, pure, spotless Creature; even the human Nature of his own Son; it is most evident(*l*).

Bp. *Stillingfleet* softens the matter, and says; Notwithstanding his Innocency, a person may *oblige himself*, by some act of his own, to undergo that Punishment, which otherwise he did not deserve; which Punishment in that case will be just and agreeable to Reason(*m*).

After him Dr. *Samuel Clarke* says; though to *punish* the Innocent, instead of the Guilty, is evidently *unjust*; yet to *permit* an innocent person to take it upon himself, is by no means so.

Lastly, Mr. *James Foster*, after all these Opinions had been canvassed and found wanting, expresses the same Doctrine with *John Fox*; "I must own, I cannot see how it could be unjust or tyrannical; to propose even to an innocent Person to suffer, with his own *free consent*; in order to promote so great a good: especially if we suppose, what the *Christian Revelation* ex-

(*l*) Court of the *Gentiles*, partiv. p. 368. (*m*) Letter V. p. 642.

pressly teaches in the present case; that he would be gloriously and amply rewarded for it⁽ⁿ⁾.”

If it be said, that this is only a dispute about *Words*; I answer, it is a dispute of the utmost Consequence to be precisely understood in the true *Sense*. For, if we allow the Sufferings of Christ to have been a Punishment; we must allow, that in punishing him, the Supreme Being acted an unjust part: and, as long as it is maintained to be a *Christian* Doctrine, we can never expect that either *Jew*, *Mahometan*, or *Deist*, will be converted to *Christianity*. But this is not the only instance; in which altering the Words of Scripture hath obstructed the progress of *Christianity*.

§ 2. There are some *Christians*; who, in order to shew the Justice of God in the punishment of *Christ* for *our* Sins; and *our* Forgiveness by *his* Righteousness; have invented a Notion, they pretend to find in the New Testament; which, if true, must destroy all our Reasoning upon the nature of God's Justice; and all our Hopes in the practice of Virtue: and that is, the doctrine of *imputed* Sin; and *imputed* Righteousness; by which they understand, that, on the one hand, *Our* Sins are all *imputed* to *Christ*; and He is punished for them: and *His* Righteousness is *imputed* to *Us*, and we are rewarded

(n) *Foster* against *Tindal*, 334.

for it. But we may be as sure, as we are of our own existence; that a righteous and just God will neither *impute* Righteousness, where it is not; nor over-look it, where it is: “for he that justifieth the Wicked, and he that condemneth the Just, even they both are an Abomination to the Lord(o).”

The Scripture Phrase of *imputing* Righteousness, in the true Sense of it, as given us by the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, means neither more nor less than the *forgiveness* of Sin. He tells us; *David* describeth the Man to whom God *imputeth* Righteousness without Works: saying, Blessed are they, whose Iniquities are *forgiven*; and whose Sins are *covered*. Blessed is the Man, to whom the Lord will *not impute* Sin(p). Where we see, that *imputing* Righteousness is equivalent to the *forgiving* Iniquities; the *covering* of Sin, and the *not imputing* of Sin: in which sense, the Doctrine is very plain and intelligible; and the Figure of speech very natural. For as He, that takes away an obstruction to the Sight, is said to give Sight; and He, that takes away an obstruction to our Health, is said to give Health: So He, that takes away Sin, which is an obstruction to our Righteousness; is said to give or impute Righteousness: and it is upon this account that *Christ* is called The Lord *our* Righteousness.

(o) *Prov.* xvii. 15.

(p) *Rom.* iv. 7.

§ 3. If it be then asked; upon what Ground the *Christians* have founded the strange Opinion of *vicarious Punishment*; so derogatory to the Attributes of God, and so contrary to the whole Tenor of Scripture: It must be reply'd; they have founded it upon *figurative* Expressions, taken *literally*; and upon Texts of Scripture written by *Jews*, and intended to be understood agreeably to *their* language, customs and religious ceremonies; and then interpreted by the customs and ceremonies of the Heathen Philosophers, who had relinquished Paganism and become *Christians*.

The *Christians* tell us of the many mixtures and additions, which *Philo* hath thrown into his works; out of a vain and eager desire, which is also observable in *Josephus*, to adapt the *Jewish* Laws and Theology to the Taste of the reigning Philosophy of the *Gentiles* of their Times(*q*). The observation is just: but this vain and eager desire, has not been a failing peculiar to the *Jews*; but common to all Nations. Dr. *Henry More*, and more lately Dr. *Middleton*, have shewn it in many customs and ceremonies of the *Romish* Church; which appear to be old Heathen Rites new vamped and adapted to *Christianity*: and therefore it is but just, that the *Christians* should bear their part in the accusation; as well

(*q*) *Pyle* on *Heb.* i. 1.

as We: and we may safely return them the compliment they have bestowed upon *Josepbus* and *Philo* with Interest; by making reprisals upon *Origen*, *Clem. Alexand.* and almost all their primitive Writers. For, when the Heathen Philosophers, among which were many of the followers of *Plato*, did in great numbers receive the *Christian* Religion; and very few of them knew any thing of the Idiom and Genius of the *Hebrew* language, or the nature of the *Jewish* ceremonies: they also seem to have been as vainly eager and desirous to interpret the figures, allusions, doctrines, and ceremonies, of the *old* Testament, and particularly their *Sacrifices*, according to the notions which they had imbibed among the *Heathens* before their conversion: sometimes explaining the *Christian* doctrine by the *Platonic* Philosophy; sometimes carrying the allusions farther than was intended by the Writers; sometimes giving their ceremonies a sense entirely *Heathenish*; and thereby introducing a language into the *Christian* Church, which the genuine system of *Judaism* was a Stranger to. And among these vain and eager accommodations of *Judaism* to *Gentilism*, was introduced at first the notion of *vicarious Punishment*: for *Judaism* knows no such doctrine; and if it was not the sense of the *old* Testament, it can never be the sense of the *new*.

§ 4. The

§ 4. The doctrine, which we find in the Gospels and Epistles, is this: that the Blood of *Christ* was shed FOR many(*r*), for the Remission of Sins; or, as it is expressed in other Words, the Son of Man came to give his Life a *ransom* FOR many(*s*). St. *Paul* expresses the same Doctrine variously. He gave himself a *ransom* FOR all(*t*). He gave himself FOR us, that he might *redeem* us from all Iniquity(*u*). He was delivered FOR our Offences(*x*). God gave him up FOR us all(*y*). He died FOR our Sins according to the Scriptures(*z*). He gave his Life FOR the Sheep(*a*): *Christ* our Passover was *sacrificed* FOR us(*b*).

All these Texts are manifestly intended to express the same Doctrine. And the first question, in order to explain the Sense of it, seems to be this; in what *sense* these things were done FOR Us; whether in our Stead, or on our Account, and for our Advantage. The *English* word FOR and the *Greek* words ἀντὶ, ὑπὲρ, &c. being capable of any one of these senses.

Now if the true Doctrine be, that these things were done upon our *Account*, or for our *Advantage*; the word FOR will have the same sense, in

(*r*) *Matt.* xxvi. 28. περὶ πολλῶν. (*s*) *xx.* 28, λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, *Mar.* x. 45. i. e. for the *Many*, or for *All*; as *I Tim.* ii. 6. ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων. see *Dan.* xii. 2. (*t*) ὑπὲρ *I Tim.* ii. 6. (*u*) ὑπὲρ *Tit.* ii. 14. (*x*) διὰ *Rom.* iv. 25. (*y*) ὑπὲρ *Rom.* viii. 32. (*z*) *I Cor.* xv. 3. (*a*) *Jo.* x. 15. (*b*) ὑπὲρ *I Cor.* v. 7.

all

all the Texts: but if the true Doctrine be, that they were done *in-ſtead-of*; the ſenſe of the word will not be the ſame, in the different Texts; but muſt be greatly varied. For *Chriſt* could not be delivered, *inſtead* of our offences; nor die, *inſtead* of us; for, if he did, we ſhould not die ourſelves: nor could he be our Paſſover, ſacrificed *for* us, *in our ſtead*; for we were never ſentenced to be ſacrificed: and the Paſſover(c) was not a Sin-offering; and therefore theſe things could not happen in our *ſtead*, but only upon our *account* and for our *advantage*(d).

If it be ſaid; that *Chriſt* gave himſelf a *Ranſom* for us, I *Tim.* ii. 6. and was therefore ſacrificed

(c) The *Paschal* Lamb was not to atone or expiate; nor was it offered in any other ſenſe, than merely to ſave the *Iſraelites*; for their advantage, or on their Account. See *Sykes* on Redemption, 336. In the *Miſhna* and by *Maimonides* it is ſaid to be like the Peace-Offerings: it was all carried-away by the Proprietor, except the Blood and Inwards; and there was no meat and drink Offering, no Portion for the Prieſt, and no laying-on of Hands; as in expiatory Sacrifices.

(d) If any Strefs be laid upon the *Greek* Prepoſitions, we may obſerve; that, as *Chriſt* ſuffered *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* for Us; ſo we alſo are ſaid to ſuffer *ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ*, for Him: *Phil.* i. 29. not *inſtead* of him, but upon his *account*.—We alſo ſuffer *διὰ δικαιοσύνης*, not *inſtead* of Righteouſneſs; but on *account* of it: I *Pet.* iii. 14. So *ὑπὲρ* is uſed, *Acts* xxvi. 7.—and *ὑπὲρ*, *Matt.* v. 28. an eye *for*, or on *account* of an eye. *Matt.* xvii. 27. give it *for* me and thee. *Rom.* ii. 17. I *Cor.* xi. 15. *Heb.* xii. 2, &c. See *Sykes* on Redemption, p. 311. 397. 215. 221. 197. 244. 252.

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in our *stead*; it must be observed, that the payment of a Ransom is no Sacrifice; and therefore no *vicarious* Sacrifice: it means no more, than that he died to save us—The Word *Ransom* means *literally* the Price of Redemption: but this is only when the Redemption signifies *literally* a deliverance from captivity, by a Price paid. But as a deliverance from captivity may be brought-about by Power, or other means; the Word *Ransom* in such case must be *figurative*; and signify the power or other means, by which we are delivered: and the case must be the same, where there is no Captivity; but merely a deliverance from any kind of Affliction. Thus God redeemed the *Jews* from *Egypt*; not by a *price paid*, but by *power* and an *outstretched arm*. And thus *Moses* is called a Redeemer (though translated a Deliverer, *Acts* vii. 35. λυτρωτής) and Dr. *Sykes* observes, that there are above *fifty* instances in the old Testament, where the word [λυτρεῖν] to *ransom*, means barely to *deliver*; without any Price or Ransom paid at all. But, if a Ransom must always suppose a Price paid: I would ask, what was the Price paid by the redeeming Angel spoken-of by *Jacob*; and called the Angel that Redeemed him from all evil(*e*)?

Now our deliverance from Sin and Death by *Christ*, is an act of Power; like the deliverance

(*e*) *Gen.* xlviii. 16. this Redemption relates to ch. xxiii. 15. See also *Deut.* vii. 7.

from *Egypt*: and the Power of delivering was gained by a Life and Death of Obedience: for *Christ* suffered, and died, and revived; that he might be Lord of quick and dead. His Death therefore was not so *properly*, nor so *immediately*, the Ransom or Price paid for our Redemption; as the price paid *in order to gain the power to redeem* and become a Prince and a Saviour: and our Redemption or Deliverance was the *Effect* of this Power, and is gained immediately by the exercise of it.—This will appear more plainly, when we consider; that the same figurative expressions are used of God the Father; who is likewise called our Redeemer; and is said to have bought us with a Price(*f*), and to have given-up his Son for us all. But to whom did God the Father pay the Price, or the Ransom? certainly, to no one. The words therefore can be only figurative; and meant to express the method, by which God hath saved us; *viz.* by giving-up his *Son* to Death; as *Christ* hath saved us, by giving-up *himself*.—And this very small difference, whether the Death of *Christ* be the immediate Cause of our Redemption and Deliverance from Sin and Death *by way of Ransom*; or the immediate cause, by which *he gained the power to ransom* or deliver; makes a very great difference in the Doctrines which follow from them: the *one* is Scripture, and the *other* not so;

(*f*) I Cor. vi. 20.

the *one* exalts our notions of the supreme Goodness, the *other* degrades them; the *one* supposes, that God had a great Scheme to accomplish for the Redemption or Deliverance of man from Sin and Death; and that the sufferings and death of *Christ* were proper to compleat it in the wisest and most effectually manner; and that *Christ* was willing to undertake whatever God should please to appoint, in order to accomplish that end; and, accordingly he died, and for his obedience to death received as a reward the Power of ransoming or delivering from Sin and Death; and as it was by his obedience to the Will of God, which was compleated by his Death, that he gained the power to ransom or deliver; his Death itself is figuratively called a *Sacrifice*, and a *Ransom*; though the *actual* deliverance was the *exercise* of that Power.—This is very intelligible, and agreeable to Wisdom and Rectitude; so that in the strict sense of the word he was not so properly the Redemption and Ransom, as the *Redeemer* and *Ransomer*; that is, the Deliverer or Saviour.—The *other* doctrine is; that it was inconsistent with the nature of God's Government of the World, that he should *forgive* a Sinner; without *vindicating* the honour of his Laws; and therefore mercifully passing-by the offenders, he punishes an innocent person in their stead; receiving *his* Punishment as a full Payment, Satisfaction and Ransom. And thus
God

God Almighty, the most benevolent, just, and merciful, of all Beings in the Universe, is supposed to redeem us from Sin and Death, to which we were in captivity; by punishing the innocent instead of the guilty, rather than forgive us *freely*; as the Scripture declares that he has done.

The calling the Death of *Christ* a *Ransom*, in the sense of a Price paid for our deliverance, is certainly as near to the literal sense, as a Figure can well be; but it is not precisely the Truth; it is the Cause once removed, instead of the immediate and efficient Cause: for, though the Power of delivering or ransoming was gained by his Death: yet the actual deliverance was effected by his Life: so that we are not saved by his Death, but by his Life(g): that is, by a voluntary exertion of that power which he gained by his death: His *Death* was therefore the *immediate* and *efficient* cause of his *power*; and the *Exertion of his power* the *immediate* and *efficient* cause of our Salvation(b). Whereas, if his death had been merely

(g) Rom. v. 10, &c.

(b) And therefore St. Paul argues, I Cor. xv. 29. else what shall they do who are baptised for the dead, ὑπὲρ νεκρῶν, if the dead rise not at all?—i. e. to what purpose is it to be baptised into the religion of such as will never rise again to make good your hopes? νεκρῶν being used instead of νεκροί, changes the particular case into a general assertion. Homer does the same thing; Odyss. A 293, by changing the feminine

merely a literal Ransom or Redemption, it could have reached no farther than the penalty of the first Offence; and the regaining of what had been before lost: but the effect of this power that was gained by death, or rather by his obedience to death, extends to another Life; and Happiness in his Kingdom. See the Apostle's reasoning on this subject(i).

Farthermore, if we consider the death of *Christ* as the immediate cause of our deliverance, in a literal sense; we must explain also in a literal sense who it was that held us in Captivity; and not only to whom the Ransom was paid by *Jesus Christ*; but to whom the Price was paid by *God the Father*. The Ransom could not be paid literally to God, for he is the Redeemer; and he redeemed us by giving-up his Son to death; and though we read, that we are redeemed to God; we never read of our redemption from him; and consequently, the Ransom and Price paid could not be literally paid to God: first, because a literal Ransom could not be paid to the Redeemer; or to the person who paid it; and secondly, if it were a literal Ransom, it must be literally paid to the person who held us in

minine gender into a masculine, when speaking of *Nausicaa*.

ὥς ἔκιναν ἑλποιο νεώτερον ἀνδρῶν
ἐξέμεν.

(i) Rom. v. 15, &c.

Captivity:

Captivity: but we were not in captivity to God, but to Sin and Death; (his Servants we were, to whom we obeyed:) and from these we were to be delivered and redeemed.

Was it then a literal Ransom, which was to be paid to Sin and Death? This cannot be; because there are no such Persons: there remains then no Person, to whom it could literally be paid; except we consider ourselves in Captivity to the *Devil*: but we never heard of any price that was paid to *Him*; we are delivered from *Him*, by an act of Regal Power. God anointed *Jesus of Nazareth* with the Holy Ghost and with Power; who went-about doing good, and healing all those who were oppressed by the *Devil*(*k*). He took Flesh and Blood; that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death; that is, the *Devil*(*l*). And Death is swallowed-up in *Victory*(*m*): and therefore we give thanks to God, who hath given us the *Victory* through *Jesus Christ* our Lord(*n*); and this Victory over Death is the Victory over *Samael*, the Angel of Death; and consequently, there can be no ransom paid to Him; but we are ransomed from his power by the superior power of a Prince and a Saviour.

It is true, that *Christ* did suffer great Distress in gaining this god-like Power; yet not as an

(*k*) *Acts* x. 38.

(*l*) *Heb.* ii. 14.

(*m*) *Is.* xxv. 8.

(*n*) *I Cor.* xv. 57.

Offender ; but as a Prince who undertakes great difficulties and dangers to deliver his Country from Ruin ; whom God makes use of as his Instrument to accomplish his Will, (as he speaks both of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyrus* ;) and afterwards rewards, because the Pleasure of the Lord had prospered in his hands. But he is not to be looked-upon, as if he were *smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted* ; while employed in this dangerous and laborious service : nor are the difficulties he goes through to be considered as vicarious Punishments, by which he saves them from the destruction they had deserved : but as the voluntary Sufferings of a great and glorious Prince, for great and glorious Purposes. For he knew ; that it was the design of God, that the world should be instructed in righteousness by him ; and that he should suffer death, in carrying-on that important work ; and that God would reward his Sufferings in so good a cause, by raising him up to be a Prince and a Saviour.

We find in St. *John's* Gospel, that the *Messiah* is called the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World : but it is no where said, that he did this as a *Victim* or *vicarious Sacrifice*. The allusion seems to be made to the liii. chapter of *Isaiah* ; but the Lamb is not there considered as a Lamb to be sacrificed ; but as a Lamb to be sheared ; and where it goes-on to speak of him as making his soul an offering for Sin, he is not
con-

considered as a Lamb or a Victim; but as a Man acting voluntarily, and offering-up his Life. And though in the *Apocalypse* he is spoken-of as the Lamb that was slain, in allusion to the *Jewish* customs; he is not ever spoken-of as a *vica-rious* Sacrifice: for they had *no* Sacrifices of that nature.

That the word *Sacrifice* is frequently used in a figurative sense, merely by way of allusion, both in the *old* and *new* Testament, is undeniable. For we find, that the *Sacrifice* of God is a troubled Spirit (*o*); and that he is pleased with a *Sacrifice* of Righteousness (*p*); and in the *new* Testament we read of the *Sacrifice* of Praise (*q*), and of a spiritual *Sacrifice* (*r*); and our Bodies are said to be a living *Sacrifice* (*s*); and the gifts sent by St. *Paul* to the *Philippians* by *Epaphroditus* are called an odour of a sweet smell, a *Sacrifice* well pleasing to God: and to do good is called a *Sacrifice*, with which God is well pleased. And, where the *figurative* use of the word was so common, even when there was no Death; it would have been wonderful indeed, if it had not been sometimes applied to the *Christian Sacrifice*, where there was the *real* Death of *Christ*; who voluntarily gave up his Life to procure the good of Mankind.

(*o*) *Psf.* xli. 16. (*p*) *Ib.* li. 19. (*q*) *Heb.* xiii. v.
(*r*) *I Pet.* ii. v. (*s*) *Rev.* xii. 1. *Phil.* iv. 18.

It is not therefore at all surprizing; that *St. Paul*, who deals so much in figures, and alludes so continually to the *Jewish* customs; should speak of the death of *Christ*, as a *Sacrifice* or an Offering: and use the common *sacrificial* terms, by way of figure; without ever suspecting that the words would be taken literally^(t)—But, on the contrary, if it be the true and literal sense; it is impossible to account for it, how the Evangelists and the rest of the sacred writers should never have mentioned it as such; in a plain and intelligible manner: especially, if it be a doctrine of such Importance, and so essential to a true belief, as it has been represented by the Moderns. Whereas *St. Paul* himself speaks of it in a very indeterminate manner; sometimes, as a Peace-offering; sometimes, as a Sin-offering; sometimes, as our Passover; and sometimes, as a Propitiation: All which expressions, when considered as Comparisons or Figures, are very

(t) Why should we expect the Sacred Writers to be more critically exact in their expressions, than the Classic writers; who affected the utmost purity and elegance? And yet none of them would have scrupled to say, that *Codrus* sacrificed himself for *Athens*; or that *Curtius* offered himself for *Rome*. *Justin* says of *Codrus*; Pro Salute Patriæ, morte se offerentis bello liberantur. And *Cicero* in his oration for *L. Flaccus*, towards the end, says; Quam potestis *P. Lentulo* mactare victrinem gratiorem quam si *L. Flaccus*, sanguine illius nefarium in vos omnes odium Saturaveritis? Litemus igitur *Lentulo*.

just;

just; though inadequate: but, as all these Sacrifices do in some particulars differ from one another; it is impossible they should be all true and exact, in the same *literal* sense; much less in a sense to which the *Mosaic* Law was a stranger; as when a *propitiatory* Sacrifice is explained in the heathenish sense to mean a *vicarious* Sacrifice of Life for Life(*u*). For the Sacrifices among the *Jews* had no such meaning; and consequently, the word *Sacrifice* in the *new* Testament, which alludes to them, ought not to be so understood: as will farther appear from what follows—

1. That the Life of the Animal is never called in the *old* Testament a *Ransom*; nor is there any such expression, as ἀντίλυτρον, ἀντίψυχον, λύτρον ἐπὶ ψυχῆς, Life for Life, Soul for Soul, equivalent Ransom for Soul; or the like(*x*). Nor was the Atonement made, by the death of the Animal; as is generally imagined by the common people; but by the sprinkling of the blood afterwards: for the Atonement was made by the Priest; but

(*u*) The whole nation of the *Gauls*, says *Cæsar* in his Commentaries; is much addicted to Superstition: and therefore such as are greatly afflicted with Distempers, or engaged in Battles and Dangers; either sacrifice Men for Victims, or make a Vow that they will do so: because they think the Divinity of the immortal Gods cannot otherwise be rendered propitious, than if the life of Man be given for the life of Man. *Cæsar*, Com. l. vi. c. 15.

(*x*) *Sykes of Sacrifices*, 135, 139.

the office of the Priest, who made the Atonement, did not begin, till after the Victim was slain by the person who brought it: and then the Priests, the sons of *Aaron*, made the Atonement; by sprinkling the Blood about the Altar, or by pouring it at the bottom of it(y). So that nothing *vicarious* can be proved, from the death of the Animal; as the Atonement did not consist in it.

2. As the Words ἀντίλυτρον, &c. are not found in the *old* Testament; which certainly would be there, if the *Mosaic* Sacrifices were mean'd to be *vicarious*: so neither does the *Hebrew* word *Copher* (*pice obduxit*) the original of what is translated the Propitiatory or Mercy Seat [ἱλαστήριον], convey any such meaning: but signifies in general to *cover*; and from thence is used for Expiation, or Atonement, or the covering of Sin, in the sense in which it is said in *Pf.* xxxi. and cited thence, *Rom.* iv. 7. Blessed are They, whose Sins are *covered*; blessed is the Man, to whom God will not impute Sin. According to which sense, he that forgives, is himself the Propitiation; as *Christ* is called by *St. John*(z). So that nothing *vicarious* in the nature of the *Jewish* Sacrifices, can be urged from the Etymology of the word.

(y) *Levit.* vi. 7. See *Sykes* on *Sacrifices*, 23, 24, 180, 194, 203. and *Theophilus Gale's* Court of the Gentiles.

(z) *I John* ii. 2. iv. 10.

3. Instead of the *Jewish* Atonements being *vicarious* Sacrifices of life for life, like those of the *Druids*; it is notorious, that, according to the *Mosaic* Law, 1. No Atonements could be made, where Life was forfeited. 2. Atonements were made, where there was no Guilt; as for Places and Things, and natural Infirmities, and accidental Uncleannefs. 3. Atonements were made, without the death of any Animal, or the shedding of Blood; as by an offering of flour, &c. and consequently, these Sacrifices could not possibly be mean'd to be *vicarious*.

In truth, Sacrifices were at first designed as free-will Offerings and Gifts of the first-fruits of the Earth or Fold (*a*); and men offered up to

(*a*) *Gen.* iv. They are called Gifts, *Ex.* xxviii. 38. *Lev.* xxiii. 38. *Num.* xviii. 29, &c. and in the new Testament, *Luke* xxi. 1. *Heb.* vi. 1. viii. 4. ix. 9. xi. 4, &c. It was the opinion of *Bochart*, in a sermon preached at *Caen*, Dec. 30. 1663, on *Gen.* iv. 3. *At the end of the days*; that by *days* was mean'd the *Year*, at the end of which, in *September*, *Cain* and *Abel* offered up their Sacrifices, 1. as commemorations of the Creation, which was in Autumn; 2. as thankful acknowledgements of God's blessing them with the fruits of the earth: answering to which the *Jews* had their feasts of In-gathering, when we read of the joy of Harvest; *Deut.* xiv. 22, 23. *Pf.* iv. 7. The feast of Vintage, in *September*; the custom of the Men of *Sichem* of sacrificing and feasting at the end of the Year; *Ju.* ix. 27. *Jer.* xli 1, 5, 8. And hence the *Bacchanalia*, &c. *Gale's* Court of the *Gentiles*, part I. p. 270. Book ii. Chap. 9. p. 149.

God

God such things as were under their care, by way of Thankfulness for the increase of them; and not by way of Atonement for Sin. Accordingly, the Sacrifices of *Cain* and *Abel* are called *Minchas* or Gifts; and were taken from the fruits of the Ground and the firstlings of the Flock.

The Origin of Sacrifices was the same; both among the *Jews* and *Pagans*. *Aristotle* tells us, that the ancient sacrifices and assemblies to that end were after the gathering-in of the Fruits; for an oblation of the first fruits (*b*); and in *Rome* they tasted not of their new Corn or Wine, before the Priests had sacrificed the first-fruits; according to the order of *Numa* (*c*): and the same was the Law of the XII Tables (*d*); and this is confirmed from the ancient custom of offering in the first place some of the hair cut from the victim's forehead, which was called ἀπαρχαί, first fruits, and the action was expressed by ἀπάρχεσθαι, as in *Homer*—

πολλὰ δ' Ἀθήνη

Εὐχῇ ἀπαρχόμενος κεφαλῆς τρίχας ἐν πυρὶ βάλλων. (*e*).

The same appears from translating *Therumab* (*Offerings*) by the word ἀπαρχαί, first fruits (*f*);

(*b*) *Arist. Eth.* l. viii. to the same purpose *Porphyrus* de abstin. lib 2. S. 27. the Sacrifices were of first-fruits. See *Stillingfleet's Iren.* p. 77.

(*c*) *Pliny*, xviii. cap. 2.

(*d*) *De Relig.* tit. 1. lex. iv.

(*e*) *Homer Odyf.* γ.

and *Iliad.* ξ.

(*f*) *Exod.* xxv. 2, 3. Lxx. translation.

through

though it was an offering of gold and silver, and brass, and purple, and scarlet, &c.(g). And this original meaning of Sacrifices, as gifts of the first-fruits, continued, for any thing we know to the contrary, till the days of *Abraham*. And such Writers, as have fixed a narrower signification to the word *Sacrifice*, have only involved the subject in *Egyptian* Darknes; and fatally perplexed and exposed to scorn and contempt the simplest and most rational institution in the world.

Abraham is called, by *Cyril*, a lover of Sacrifices; but, of what nature his Sacrifices were, we are not certain. The Sacrifice mentioned in *Gen. xv.* was only in Vision, as the Rabbins in *Pirke R. Eliezer* expound the whole chapter; and it appears from comparing the fifth and twelfth verses: in the fifth, God brings *Abraham* into the field at the shutting up of the Evening; and shews him the Stars of Heaven: and in the 12th verse it is yet Day, and the Sun is not gone down. In this vision, *Abraham* enters into Covenant with God, according to the Ceremonies of the *Chaldæans*, among whom he was educated: upon which *Cyril* says; God, the great Governor of the Universe, condescends to the weakness of the good old Man; and ratified the Oath, according to the usual Ceremonies of the *Chaldæans*. And this method of making

(g) See *Sykes* on *Sacrifices*.

and renewing Covenants afterwards continued in use, by the command of God (*b*); and was used upon no other Occasions.

The sacrificing *Isaac* seems to be similar to the offering of the first fruits; the son being the fruit of the body (*i*); only with this difference, that it was undertaken by the immediate Command of God: and this appears to be a Sacrifice the nearest of any to the Sacrifice of *Christ*;

(*b*) *Limborch* says, in his dispute with *Orobio*—It seems probable to Me, that Sacrifices were not commanded to *Cain* and *Abel*, and others who lived before the Law: for I meet with no signs of any such command in the Scripture: But rather that they began from the first motion of pious Men, who knew by Reason that God was to be worshipped; and that thanks ought to be given to him for his blessings, as to the supreme Benefactor; and believed that they ought to express the grateful sense of their minds by some external act; and that this would be best done, by consecrating to God in a particular manner a part of the good things which he had given them; and destroying them in honour of God. *Amica Coll.* p. 609.

And *Orobio* says, in answer to *Limborch*—But these things are not so necessary to the observance of the Law of God; that it would be imperfect without them. This is so far from the truth; that the learned R. *Mosès Maimon* thought, that Sacrifices were not commanded by God; as being *necessary*: but because the People, being accustomed to sacrifice in *Egypt*, would go back to the religious rites of the *Gentiles*; if they were not prevented by a command to sacrifice: therefore, &c. *ibid.* 210.

(*i*) The Prophet *Micah* preserves this Similitude, when he says; shall I offer the fruit of my Body for the sin of my Soul? *Micah* vi. 7.

being

being both of them acts of obedience to God, and undertaken by his Command: in both, the life was to be offered up to God as a free Gift; and without any offence committed by the offerer, from which he was to be purified; and there was no meat or drink offerings at either, to prove them to be expiatory; and no sign of eating and drinking at God's Table; for neither God nor Man could be supposed to partake of such a Sacrifice: and therefore the sacrifice could not be considered as the *Bread* of God, nor the altar as the *Table* of God.

At the giving the *Mosaic* Law, the case was greatly altered from what it was before. Sacrifices of various kinds were instituted, and became the method of intercourse between God and Man on every occasion; in order to keep separate the worship of the *Jew* and *Gentile*. For no one could partake of the Sacrifices of *Jehovah*, who was a worshipper of the *Gentile* Gods; their rites and ceremonies being so opposite. Besides this use, the ceremonial Law was a shadow of the moral Law; and the washings and purifications by blood and water and oil, had an analogy to the purifications of the mind; and the several sorts of sacrifices and purifications all served in general to promote a religious Worship, and a pure and holy Life: and were appropriated, some to times of thanksgiving, others to prayer for blessings, or

forgiveness of sin in general, or of particular sins.—

But, if we consider, what that *essential* Relation is; which was equally preserved in *all* sacrifices and oblations, and from whence alone we can form a judgement of the meaning of a Sacrifice in *general*; we can find no other than this—that it was a sacred Gift(*k*) set apart to God, by which the Sacrificer shewed his readiness to part with his property to religious uses; and thereby openly and publickly(*l*) manifested his worship of that God, to whom the Sacrifice was made(*m*): for Sacrifices were never meant as *private*, but as *public* acts of Worship. And if we consider, what is meant by Atonements and Propitiations; so as to take-in *all* Atonements on *every* Occasion; we shall find them to have no other meaning and design, than to *purify* or *sanctify*, or *set apart* any Person or Thing to the service of God; by separating them from com-

(*k*) *Corban* was a Gift to God *only*; *Mincha* signified a Gift *either* to God or Man.

(*l*) *Plato* lays it down as an inviolable Constitution; that no one have an Altar in his own private house. *de Leg.* lib. 10. See *Herod.* of the Persian Customs Cl.

(*m*) Mr. *Pyle* on *Levit.* i. 4. says; This free burnt-offering was made in Acknowledgement of the Sovereignty, Power and Providence of God; in Testimony of his (the Sacrificer's) owning him as his only Lord, and continuing in Covenant with him and imploring his blessing.

mon use (*n*): for it is only in this sense that Atonements can be understood to relate to *Things* and *Places*, as well as *Persons*; to the guiltless, as well as the guilty; and to be made by water or oil, or a sacrifice of flour, or touching the altar, as well as by the death of a Victim.

By these methods the sacrificers were purified by the *Mosaic* law, *as to the flesh*; for this was all, that any sacrifices could do; the blood of bulls and of goats could reach no farther than the expiation of *legal* Uncleaness (*o*); and they approached to God with pure Hands, to signify the purity of the Heart; and as blood was looked upon among the *Jews* with the greatest reverence, it was always made use of as a purification; when any animal was slain in sacrifice. But such sacrifices were not looked-upon as more compleat, than when *no* blood was shed; as in the offering of Flour, or of the Scape goat, [which is called a Sin-offering, and was presented alive before the Lord (*p*);] or when the Atonement was made, without either death or offering, by touching the Altar. From all which it appears, that the Atonement, according to the *Mosaic*

(*n*) *Gen.* ii. 3. When God sanctified the seventh day, it was by setting it apart for *religious* uses. So Persons were *sanctified*, *Exod.* xix. 10. and Houses, *Lev.* xxvii. 14. and Fields. ver. 16. and the Altar, *Ex.* xxix. 36, 37. and the People by touching it.

(*o*) *Heb.* ix. 13. (*p*) *Lev.* xvi. 5. 10.

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law,

law, became such; because it was received as such by God, and not from any value in the offering itself, or any thing *vicarious* in the nature of it. And from hence we may observe; that the *Christians*, when they speak of the infinite Value of the blood of *Christ*, mistake the very nature of the *Mosaic* atonements; in which the intrinsic value of the Sacrifice was intirely out of the question. The word *Atonement*, or any others supposed to be equivalent to it, are so seldom used in the *new* Testament; as plainly shews them to be mere allusions to the *Jewish* Customs; like many other things, to which *Christ* and the death of *Christ* are compared: but by no means capable of a *literal* meaning, even in the *Mosaic* sense of the word; and much less so, in the sense of a *vicarious* sacrifice.

Indeed, it is impossible; that any of these expressions should be understood in any other than a *figurative* sense: because, when *Christ* came into the World, to gather together both *Jews* and *Gentiles* under one head; and consequently, to put an end to the Law of Ceremonies, which separated them, and which the whole world could not possibly comply with; all *Atonement* appointed by the *Mosaic* Law naturally and necessarily *ceased*. But as it was not fit, that any of the benefits should therefore cease, which had ever been received by them; but it was still proper, that the worshippers of God should be
purified

purified and sanctified, and fit for the service of God, as they were before; all these Requisites, and all these Advantages we received by the *Christian* Dispensation, are spoken-of in the *Christian* Church (but most certainly in a figurative *sense*) in the same *words* as they were spoken-of in the *Jewish* Church. And *Christ*, who has conferred them upon us, is spoken-of in the language of the *Jewish* Law, (which had now ceased to be of force,) as the High-Priest, and the Victim: and the Propitiation [or Atonement], (q) and the sacrifice of every kind, our Sin-

(q) 1. The Word *καταλλαγή*, which is translated *Atonement*, *Rom. v. 11.* ought to have been translated *Reconciliation*; as the verb and participle are used in the foregoing verse. And it is observable; that, whatever mention is made of Reconciliation to God in the new Testament, it refers to reconciling the heathen World, or such as had ceased to be the people of God, to God, and making them the people of God, and granting them the privileges of his Kingdom. *Sykes, of Redemp. p. 56. 201.*

We are reconciled to God; by the Knowledge of his Righteousness and Love to Mankind, in giving us Remission of sins passed through his forbearance: and giving up his Son *Jesus Christ* to death for us all: as the faithful Witness to the Doctrine which he preached. Thus we are reconciled by his Death, or by Faith in his Blood—And, as he received power to give eternal Life, we are saved by his Life. Whereas, if this Reconciliation [*καταλλαγή*] was an Atonement or Expiation in a literal sense; there could be no such distinction made by the Apostle: but *Salvation* would have been wrought by the death of *Christ*, as well
as

Sin-offering(*r*) and Peace-offering, and Passover and Sanctification, and Righteousness : [see the case

as the *Reconciliation*. But the Apostle speaks here precisely ; If, when we were Enemies, we were *reconciled* to God by the *Death* of his son ; much more, being *reconciled*, we shall be *saved* by his *Life*. *Rom. v. 10.*

2. The word *ἱλαστήριον*, which is falsely translated *Propitiation*, *Rom. iii. 25.* signifies the *Mercy-seat* See *Jos. Mede* on God's House. *Taylor* on the *Romans*, 268. *Sykes* on *Sacrifices*, 152. and on *Redemption*, 192. The *Mercy-seat* is described, *Exod. xxv. 17—22.* This was the place, from whence the commands of God were given out to the *Jews* ; by *Christ*, the *Jehovah Angel*. See *Deut. viii. 89.* But, since *Christ* is made the Salvation of God to the ends of the earth ; (*Is. xlix. 6.*) he is become the *Mercy-seat* to the *Gentiles* ; as well as to the *Jews*. God hath set him forth, says the Apostle, *Rom. iii. 25.* to be a *Mercy-seat* through Faith in his blood, *to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins, that are passed through the forbearance of God.* Here we see, that *Christ* is called the *Mercy-seat* ; from the very nature of his office : which was to declare the Righteousness of God for the remission of sins passed through his forbearance.

(*r*) And upon this account, because we receive from him Remission of Sins, which was the effect of the Sin-offerings, with regard to legal uncleanness, and the purifying of the flesh ; he is called by St. *John* *ἱλασμός* which properly signifies a *Sin-offering*, and is translated a *Propitiation*. The Word is used in the New Testament but twice ; once in *Rom. v. 11.* where it ought to have been translated *Reconciliation*, as I observed ; and once in *I Jo. ii. 2.* where it signifies a *Sin-offering*.

But the death of *Christ* was of a nature, infinitely superior to any thing of that kind ; as I shall presently prove :

case of *Phineas* making an atonement; *Num.* xxv. 13. ἱξίλασατο περὶ τῶν μῶν.] And we are said to be purified by the washing of water by the Word; sometimes by the washing of Regeneration; sometimes our hearts are said to be sprinkled from an evil Conscience; which must in its very nature be a Sanctification, without any other Atonement: at other times, when the *Christian* Religion is considered as a Covenant, we are said to be sanctified by the blood of the Covenant; and, when it is considered as a doctrine to be believed and practised, we are said to be sanctified by the word of Truth:

prove: and must be therefore understood in the same sense, as when *Christ* is said by *Isaiab* to become the Salvation of God. He was not the Cause, that influenced God to save; for that was his own Benevolence and Love to the World: but the Means, by which he saved: that is, the very *efficient* Cause or Saviour. He did not *make* God *propitious*; but God sent him to become a *Propitiation*, in the sense of a Saviour; and he saved, by forgiving Sin. He did not reconcile God to the World; but he reconciled the World (that is, the *Gentile* World) to God. And by forgiving their Sins, upon their Repentance and entering into the Church of God; he is said ἱλάσκειν τὰς ἀμαρτίας to appease Sin; or to take away the sting or poisonous quality or bad effects of Sin. Thus the phrase is used, *Ecclus.* iii. 3. who so honoureth his Father, maketh atonement for his Sins. So *Ecclus.* xx. 28. and xxviii. 5. All these expressions are only figurative and partial representations of that great Truth; that *Christ* is constituted the Salvation of God, to give Repentance and Forgiveness. *Rom.* iii. 25. *Acts* v. 31.

and,

and, when the Persons are considered, by, or from whom we receive the Doctrine; we are said to be sanctified by the Father, or by the Holy Ghost, or by *Christ*, who of God is said to be made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption. Whereas in the precise literal sense they are sanctified only by *Christ* himself, or by the Father through him, by the forgiveness of Sins; all other Causes by which they are said to be sanctified, are allusions to the *Mosaic* Ceremonies; or relate to the particular Method, by which our Sanctification is gained; or to some more distant Causes, *sine qua non*, which were necessary to compleat it.

But though the offering up to the service of God the whole Employment of his Life, and even Life itself, was a Sacrifice (in the original sense of the Word), or a sacred Gift; and a Satisfaction well pleasing to God (*s*); and was re-warded

(*s*) Hostias & Victimæ Domino offeram, quas in usum mei protulit; ut rejiciam ei suum munus? ingratum est: cum sit litabilis Hostia bonus animus & pura mens & sincera conscientia. Igitur qui innocentiam colit, Domino supplicat; qui justitiam, Deo libat; qui fraudibus abstinet, propitiatur Deum; qui hominem periculo surripit, optimam victimam cædit: Hæc nostra sacrificia, hæc Dei sacra sunt; sic apud nos religiosior est ille qui justior. *Min. Felicis Oct.* See *Persius* Sat. ii. l. 72. Quin damus id Superis, de magna quod dare lance Non potuit magni *Messalæ* lippa propago; Compositum jus fasque animi, sanctos que recessus Mentis, & incoctum generoso pectus honesto—This

figu-

warded with great Blessings, as was the intended Sacrifice of *Isaac*; yet was it by no means a Sin-offering, in the sense of the *Mosaic* Sin-offering; for the following Reasons—1. because he was sent into the world with the gracious message of Pardon and Forgiveness to all such as would receive him; which Commission he executed before his Death: whereas, in the *Mosaic* Sacrifices, the Sacrifice was made before the Forgiveness.

2. It is true, that the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* labours to shew a similarity between the *Mosaic* and the *Christian* Sacrifices; which no doubt there was; and, to make-out the analogy, uses very hard *figures*: as when he compares the sprinkling the blood of the victim, to the sprinkling our hearts from an evil conscience; and the Tabernacle to the body of *Christ*, and the flesh of *Christ* to the Veil which opened the way into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; and calls it a new and a living way, and considers *Christ* both as the High-Priest and Victim. But, were the analogy ever so exact, it would not make the expressions *literal*: and in many particulars there is no manner of likeness between them. For in the Sacrifice of *Christ* there was no salting with salt, no imposition of hands, no blood sprinkled by the priest, in which consisted the atonement;

figurative expression being so natural, it is the greater wonder that any one should think of fixing a *literal* sense upon it.

for the atonement was not made by the death of the victim, but by the sprinkling of the blood; as I have already observed; Man the offender did not offer him to God; nor begged forgiveness of his Sins: all which things were customary, and most if not all of them necessary, in a *Mosaic* expiatory Sacrifice (*t*) of a Victim. But this was not the Case with *Christ*. He was crucified and slain, as a common Malefactor.

If it be said; that *Christ* was the Sacrificer, and he offered himself up to God; it should be considered, that the Sacrifices of the *Mosaic* Law were offered to gain forgiveness to the Person who sacrificed; but this could not be true of *Christ*, for he had no Sin to be forgiven.

If it be said; that he sacrificed, as a Priest, to gain forgiveness for *others*; it should be observed, that, according to the *Mosaic* Law, he was incapable of such an office: for the Law requires, that the Priests should be of the Tribe of *Levi*; or the family of *Aaron*. “But He [*Christ*], of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another Tribe; of which no man gave attendance at the Altar. For it is evident, that our Lord sprang out of *Judah*; of which tribe *Moses* spake nothing concerning the Priest-hood(*u*).” And therefore St. *Paul*, who was aware of this objection; when he speaks of *Christ* as a Priest, tells us; that he was a

(*t*) See *Sykes* on Sacrifices.

(*u*) *Heb.* vii. 13, 14.

Priest

Priest of a superior Order to the *Aaronical* Priesthood, being a Priest for ever after the order of *Melchisedek*(*x*).” This is a plain concession; that, according to the *Mosaic* Law, *Christ* was incapable as a Priest to offer any sacrifice. But, supposing he had been of the Tribe of *Levi*, the case would have been just the same; with regard to all Mankind, except the *Jews*: for the *Jewish* sacrifices did not extend beyond the Circumcision. The Sacrifice of *Christ* could not therefore be a propitiatory sacrifice, according to the *Mosaic* Law; and much less a Propitiation for the Sins of the *whole* World(*y*). And, besides all this, we must consider what *St. Paul* says at the 4th verse; that *Christ* could not offer himself to God for us, till he was constituted our High-Priest; and that was not before his Ascension into Heaven. For, if he were on Earth, he should not be a Priest: those being Priests, who offer gifts according to the Law(*z*). He could not therefore, properly and literally speaking, offer any sacrifice to God, whilst he was here on earth, according to the Law of *Moses*; because he was not a Priest according to the Law(*a*).

If it was therefore a literal offering or sacrifice made by *Christ* as a Priest; it was of a

(*x*) Ver. 17. (*y*) I *John* ii. 2. iv. 10. (*z*) *Heb.* viii. 4. (*a*) See *Sykes*, 284.

higher nature, and of a prior and superior dispensation to the *Mosaic*; such as was offered in the days of *Melchisedek*, the Priest of the most high God. But we have no reason to think, that any offerings before the Law were mean'd to be expiatory; but all of them eucharistical(*b*).

But farther, the Sacrifices of the *Mosaic* Law sanctified only to the purifying of the Flesh(*c*); and procured no Forgiveness for *moral* Turpitude; but only for *legal* Uncleaness. But the sacrifice of *Christ* had something in it of a nature greatly superior; and in its consequences not only *took away all Sin*, from those who

(*b*) We do not find, that the sacrifices were eaten by *Cain* and *Abel*; though Dr. *Sykes* supposes it, in p. 167; and assumes it as certain, in p. 179. But, if they had eaten it, it would not prove the notion of eating and drinking at God's Table, as a sign of being reinstated in Friendship with him, to be so early—*Isaac* certainly was not intended as a sacrifice to be eaten; and we are not told of any meat or drink offering, which *Abraham* had prepared at that time. Nor does it follow, from *Jacob's* calling his brethren to eat bread. For it was natural to invite their Friends to partake in the solemnity of the Sacrifice, and afterwards entertain them; without any such notion. Nay, the Entertainment itself might be looked-upon as a sacred thing; and yet be no part of the Sacrifice; nor a meat or drink-offering: much less that they considered themselves as eating and drinking at God's Table; which, as I apprehend, was a notion introduced long after.

(*c*) *Heb.* ix. 13.

received

received his Laws; but gained for them *eternal Life*: for it was not a performance of mere Rites and Ceremonies; but a life of perfect Righteousness. And in this sense I understand St. *Paul*, when he considers it as superior to those literal Sacrifices; His argument is this—when *Christ* cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God(*d*)—He taketh away the *first*, [that is, burnt-offerings and sacrifice, and offerings for Sin, which he says were offered by the Law, verse 8.] that he may establish the *second*; [viz. the doing the will of God.] Now I argue—

If sacrifices for sin are actually taken-away by *Christ*; then an actual and literal sacrifice for sin does not come in the place of them: for God cannot be supposed to take-away the *first*, in order to establish the *second*; if the *second* was the same as the first. So that the offering the Body of *Christ*(*e*) cannot be here considered as a legal sacrifice, or any thing of that nature; except merely in a figurative sense: for the Merit of *Christ*'s sufferings consisted in his

(*d*) Heb. x. 5, &c.

(*e*) Heb. x. 10.

Obedience; and in Reward of that Obedience he received the power to save.

And it is no objection to this; that what *Christ* did and suffered continues to be called a Sacrifice for sins, at the 12th verse. For it is a common figure, as Mr. *Souverain* observes; that the name, the qualities, and even the personality, of the thing that ceaseth to be, or is rejected, is given to that which takes its place; though it be of a different Nature. God, rejecting Sacrifices, gives the name of Sacrifice to the Obedience which he accepts(*f*). To the same purpose the Apostle argues in the ninth chapter to the *Hebrews*. If the blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the ashes of a Heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh; as it did, in the *Mosaic* Law: how much more shall the blood of *Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your Consciences

(*f*) *Le Platonisme dévoilé*; part. 1. ch. 18. There is nothing more natural, says Dr. *Allix*; than to give to a thing, which supplies the place of another, and which procures all the fruits of it, the name of that, instead whereof it is substituted. St. *Paul* observed this rule in his Epist. to the *Heb.* If he gave the name of Sacrifice to the Obedience of *Jesus Christ*, it was to suit his Expressions to the Ideas, which prevailed under the ancient Dispensation; wherein the principal acts of Piety consisted in Sacrifice: he applied these ancient Sacrifices to the death of *Christ*; without intending any other Mystery

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from dead works to serve the living God! That is, if the blood of bulls and goats cleansed from all *legal* turpitude; how much more shall the death of *Christ*, under the guidance of the eternal Spirit, which was the highest act of Obedience to the will of God, cleanse us from all *moral* turpitude; and prevail with us to avoid all sin and wickedness for the future, and be reconciled to God! “Those Offerings, as Mr. *Cruden* has observed in his Concordance, though they *represented* Grace and Purity, did not *communicate* them: though they convinced the sinner of the necessity incumbent on him to purify himself and make satisfaction to God; they did not impart *Innocence* to him.” But, though it was beyond the power and nature of the *Mosaic* sacrifices to cleanse from moral evil and the consequences of it; yet it was not beyond the power of the *Christian* sacrifice, considered figuratively as a sacrifice of Righteousness(g), to gain the power of forgiving.

The sacrifice of *Christ* had therefore the nearest resemblance of any to the sacrifice of *Abraham*, when he was about to offer up his son. It was an act of Righteousness, in Obedience to the will of God, as *his* was; and the Effect of both was of the same nature: for as *Abraham* by this act

(g) See the *Chaldee* Paraphrase on *Pf.* iv. 5. where it is said, Subdue your Lusts; and it shall be counted to you a sacrifice of Justice or Righteousness. *Pf.* li. 19. *Deut.* xxxiii. 19. *Pf.* iv. 5. Offer sacrifices of Righteousness; and put your Trust in the Lord.

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of Obedience gained great blessings upon *his own* family; so hath *Jesus Christ*, by becoming the Son of Man, that is, by a Life and Death of Obedience, gained the power of bestowing blessings upon *all* the families of the earth. And the extraordinary power and effect of Righteousness above Sacrifice, is very plainly revealed in many parts of the old Testament. I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice, says the Prophet *Hosea*; and the Knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings(*b*). The prophet *Samuel* says; Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams(*i*). *Micah* declares the same thing very strongly; Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings; with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams; or ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born, for my Transgression; the fruit of my Body, for the sin of my Soul? He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee; but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God(*k*)? *Jeremiah* says expressly; I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded

(*b*) *Hof.* vi. 6.(*i*) *I Sam.* xv. 22.(*k*) *Micah* vi. 6.

them,

them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of *Egypt*, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying; Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and Ye shall be my People(1). And this superiority of Righteousness to Sacrifice was plainly intimated, in the command

(1) *Jer.* vi. 22, 23. And several Learned Men understand, that Sacrifices were not originally commanded by God. The ever memorable *John Hales* of *Eaton* says; I confess, the service of God had evermore some ceremony attending it; which to our Fathers before *Christ* may seem to have been necessary, because God commanded it: but let us not deceive ourselves; for *neither was Sacrifice then, neither is Ceremony now*, esteemed necessary; neither ever was the Command of God concerning it taken to be peremptory, by those to whom it was given.—*St. Chrysostom* on the tenth of the *Hebrews*, denies that God ever from the beginning required, or that it was his Will to ordain, such an outward form of Worship. And asking therefore, *ὡς δὲ ἐπέταξε*; how then seems he to have commanded it? he answers, *συγκαταβαίνων* by condescending only, and by submitting himself to human Infirmary. Now this *συγκατάβασις*, this Condescending of God, wherein it consisted *Oecumenius* opens: for because that men had a conceit, that it was convenient to offer up some part of their substance unto God; and so strongly were they possessed of this conceit, that if they offered it not up unto Him, they would offer it up to Idols; God, saith he, rather than they should offer unto Idols, required them to offer unto Him. And thus was God understood by the holy men themselves, &c. *Hales'* sermon on *Luke* xviii. 1. p. 204, of his Remains. Is it then possible, that Christianity should be builded upon such a foundation?

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that was given to *Moses*, and represented by an outward Symbol(*m*); Thou shalt make a plate of pure Gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, Holiness to *Jehovah*; and it shall be upon *Aaron's* forehead, that he may bear, or take-away the Iniquity of the holy things, which the children of *Israel* shall hallow in all their Gifts: and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord. Here we see; that it was *Holiness*, considered *as Holiness*, and not as any particular act of sacrifice or death, that was to take-away the sins of the holy things; and make-up for the defects of their holy Gifts, or Sacrifices.

But farther, if we consider the death of *Christ* merely in the sense of a *Mosaic* Sacrifice for sin, or even as a *vicarious* Suffering of one person instead of another; the utmost advantage that can possibly be gained by it, can be no more than the forgiveness of Sin, and a freedom from Punishment; (as I have observed of a literal Ransom :) which is a most unworthy Notion of the Sacrifice of Righteousness which he made, and for which he was rewarded with Power, not only to forgive sin, but to raise the dead, and judge the world in Righteousness, and to give eternal Life to as many as he will. These are Blessings, which extend far beyond the nature of a *Mosaic* or a *vicarious* Sacrifice;

(*m*). *Ex.* xxviii. 36.

and

and cannot be accounted-for upon any such principle.

From all these considerations it seems to appear; that we have no reason to believe, that what *Christ did and suffered*, does *exactly and literally* answer to an expiatory Sacrifice; rather than to any other image to which it is compared. For the very variety of comparisons is a proof, that it does not resemble any of them throughout: and indeed it was of such a nature, and had such extraordinary effects; that nothing, which ever before happened, can fully express it. And therefore such allusions, or metaphysical expressions taken from the *Jewish* customs, should not be expected to correspond in every *particular*: it is sufficient to see the *general* import and meaning of them.

But what fully proves, that these different expressions cannot be taken in an exact and literal sense; is this—that, if any one of them be literal, not one of the rest can be so. For, 1. if the Suffering of *Christ* be the literal Payment of a debt; and he pays our debt for us, which God was not so merciful as to forgive; then his Death is not literally a Ransom from our Captivity to sin and death, nor a vicarious Punishment, nor a propitiatory sacrifice; nor is the debt forgiven *freely* by God, but only transferred from one Person to another, to pay it for us; so that what we once owed to *God*, we now

owe to *Christ*; and, if that be the case, the debt still remains: unless we will venture to say, that *Christ* will forgive, where God the Father will insist upon a recompense and payment.

2. If it be a literal Ransom from captivity; it is no literal Payment of a debt, but a price paid for the liberty of the captive; nor is it a Punishment, nor a Sacrifice, nor is our delivery *gratuitous* [δωρεάν].

3. If it be a literal Punishment; it is neither the Payment of a debt, nor a Ransom, nor a Sacrifice, nor are our Sins forgiven us *at all*.

4. If it be a literal Sacrifice, according to the *Mosaic* Law; it is neither the Payment of a debt nor a Ransom, nor a Punishment, nor can it be a Sacrifice of different kinds at once, in a *literal* sense; but it must be a Sin-offering, or a Peace-offering, or a Passover, &c. and, if it answers to any one of these, it can answer to none of the rest.

5. Lastly, if our Sins are forgiven *freely* [δωρεάν]; there can be no literal Payment of a debt, no literal Ransom, no Punishment suffered, and no Victim slain: for, where a Sacrifice was offered, the Forgiveness was never considered to be gratuitous [δωρεάν].

The only sense, in which all these things are consistent, is this; that we are forgiven [δωρεάν] *freely*, (that is, the Gift itself is *free*, and arises merely from the Love of God to the World) but

but the Power of conferring this Happiness upon Mankind, was gained by a life and death of Righteousness and Obedience, and *Christ* received it as a Reward; and God forgave us by Him, to the end that we might love, and reverence, and honour his Son, even as we honour the Father: and be influenced, from the consideration of what he has suffered for our sakes, to obey his commands; and become partakers with him in the Kingdom which he has purchased for all his obedient Subjects⁽ⁿ⁾.

Christ therefore was not literally a *Ransom*; but he *received power to ransom* or deliver from Sin and Death: he did not *pay* the debt; but he *received power to forgive* it: he was not *punished*; but he *suffered*, and thereby *gained power to remit* the Punishment: his death was not an Atonement, in the sense of that which *influences* God to save; but as the *means* by which God saves: and he did not reconcile God to the

(n) Forgiveness does not follow the Sacrifice of *Christ*, *ex opere operato*, as the School Phrase is; but from the Voluntary Exercise of his Power to forgive. If it follow'd *ex opere operato*, and his blood was estimated at its Value, which, as St. *Augustine* says, on the xcv. *Pf.* was of no less Value than the whole World; the consequence would be the Salvation of the Wicked as well as the Righteous. We are told also, that *Christ* gives eternal Life to as many as he will: But if his Sacrifice acted as an *opus operatum*, *Will* could be of no account; nor Faith, nor Works, nor any other Condition.

World,

World, for God never was at Enmity with it; [for he loved the World] but he reconciled the World to God, by gaining it over to the worship of God, and the practice of Righteousness. And in this sense all these figurative expressions will be consistent; and *Christ* may be said to be a Ransom, and a Sacrifice, and an Atonement, and yet our Sins to be forgiven *freely*, without the Payment of any equivalent, or satisfaction for it.

§ 5. Several other expressions and phrases in Scripture, alluding to the *Jewish* Ceremonies, are pressed into the service of *vicarious* Punishment; which it may be proper to mention here. The Prophet *Isaiab* says; He hath *borne* our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows (*o*); which some *Christians* interpret to mean, that *Our* sins were imputed to *Him*; and he was *charged* with them, and *punished* for them: but the *LXX* interpret the Words thus; *He bare our Sins, and was grieved about us*: and St. *Matthew* interprets them of his curing the sick and weak; for having said, *he healed those that were sick*, he adds; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by *Isaias* the Prophet, saying; He took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickneses (*p*). Now if the *taking* our Infirmities and *bearing* our Sickneses does not mean the *suffering* our infirmities and sicknesses in Himself, but only the *bearing them*

(*o*) *Is.* liii. 4.

(*p*) *Mat.* viii. 17.

away or *removing* them from Us; then the bearing our Iniquities may also be understood to signify no more, than the removing away from us our sins and iniquities by forgiveness(*q*).

Our Fathers were certainly much mistaken, and so the Prophet tells them; when they esteemed *him* to be stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted: and some of the *Christians* are now in the same Error; who consider him as punished by God and suffering, in order to vindicate his Laws: but this could not be; because he is declared to be without Spot or Blemish, even at the very time that he suffered, the just for the unjust (*r*); and, consequently, he had no Sins to *answer-for*; or *bear*, in *that* sense. And besides it is absurd to suppose; that he could suffer for the Sins of Men, as a *guilty* Person; because he came down from Heaven, with an ample power to forgive them, and did forgive the Sins of many, even before his death. And, consequently, when it is said, that *he* bare our sins and *our* sins were laid upon *him* (*s*); it must be understood in the same sense, as when the Apostle directs us to cast all our Care upon

(*q*) *Levit. xvi.*

(*r*) Without Spot, *Heb. ix. 11.* Just for the unjust; *1 Pet. i. 19.*

(*s*) *Christ* was once offered to bear the Sins of many. *Heb. ix. 28.*—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. *Is. liii. 6.*—He shall bear their Iniquities, ver. 11.

God (*t*); or, when the Psalmist says, Cast thy Burthen upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee (*u*): Where it does not mean, that God shall be made anxious with *our* Cares, and feel the weight of *our* Burthens; but merely, that he shall take them away from us. And thus the word is understood, in many places in Scripture(*x*).

The *Christians* seem by these interpretations to confound themselves; by putting forced and unnatural meanings upon phrases, which in common use every body understands in a popular sense. For, universally, when a Lord or Master is said to take upon himself the fault or error of his Servant; it has no other meaning than this, that he excuses or forgives it; or, if the fault be committed against a third Person, that he will take care the servant shall not suffer for it: but to carry the letter so far, as to suppose that the Lord himself will suffer the Punishment due to the Servant; is carrying the

(*t*) I *Pet.* v. 7.

(*u*) *Psf.* lv. 22.

(*x*) Dr. *Sykes* observes; the words of *Isaiab* [liii. 6.] in the Original signify; the Lord hath made to meet in Him the iniquities of us all: that is, that in Him contempt, pains, want and even ignominious public death fell to his Lot: or, that he came into the World to suffer all these. What we render *Iniquity*, is in the original [*Eth Avon*] *the Iniquity*; or, the treatment of Iniquity. He was treated, as if he had been a great sinner; as if he had been appointed to bear the sufferings of us all. p. 75.

words

words to an extravagant sense, in which such expressions are never intended to be understood; and especially, if the fault be committed against the Lord or Master, the notion of punishing *himself* for a fault committed against *himself*, is absurd beyond all conception.

1. In short, if the Guilt of our Sins was not literally *laid* on *Christ*, he could not in Justice be *literally* punished for them; because there can be no just Punishment, but where there is Guilt.

2. As the whole weight of Sin consists in the *consciousness* of it; *Christ* could not bear the weight of *our* sin, because he could not be conscious of what he was not guilty of.

3. If the Guilt of *our* sins was literally *laid* upon *him*; then he was considered as guilty of them: and, consequently, he could not be without Spot. But the Scripture declares him to be without Spot; and there is no Spot, in a *moral* sense, but Guilt.

4. If *our* sins are supposed to have been laid upon *Christ*, in the sense in which the sins of the People were laid upon the Scape-Goat; (which was only symbolical; for the Goat could not be literally guilty of them :) then, he could not be a literal and a legal Sacrifice: for the Scape-Goat was so unclean and unfit for Sacrifice, upon this very account; because he bare the sins of the people, though only in a figurative and sym-

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bolical sense; that the person who let him go was commanded to wash his Cloaths and bathe his Flesh in water, before he returned to the camp (y): and the Goat was called rejectaneous, or refuse(z). Nothing can therefore be more absurd, and contrary to the genius of the *Mosaic* Law, than to believe; that *Christ* was both an expiatory Sacrifice, and yet that he bare our Iniquities either in a literal or symbolical sense; for they are absolutely inconsistent with each other.

5. In a word, there is no more reason to imagine, when *Christ* sacrificed his Life for the good of *Man*, that he did it to appease the wrath of *God*; than there is to imagine this to have been the Intent of our Father *Abraham*, when he drew his knife to slay his Son. 'Tis a contradiction to the whole System of *Christianity*; which declares in many places, that God's sending his Son into the World in order to save the World, proceeded from his *Love* and *good will* to *Man*(a). And there is not a single word, in the whole New Testament; which mentions the least sign of Anger in God against *Jesus Christ*, or Guilt in *Christ*, or *Punishment* undergone by him.

§ 6. Another Objection which *We* ourselves have formerly made to *Christianity*, is the nar-

(y) *Levit.* xvi. 26. (z) See *Hammond* on *I Cor.* iv. 13.
 (a) *John* iii. 16, 17. vi. 38, 39, 40, 44. *Acts* iii. 26. *Rom.* iii. 25. v. 8. *Gal.* iv. 4. *Eph.* iii. 2.

row principles upon which it is founded : which though it comes from one of *our* Nation with a worse grace than from any other, yet we could not avoid observing it ; while almost every *Christian* we conversed with, positively insisted upon the damnation of every one that did not believe the abstrusest points of *Christianity* (and much more *Christianity* itself) in the same way with themselves ; and were so sanguine in that persuasion, as to put it into their Creeds : though, it must be owned, this conduct is condemned by some of their own people. Sir *Paul Rycant* observes, very justly ; “ how can we expect or hope-for the conversion of *Turks* or *Heathens* ; when they shall be affrighted at the church gate, by some opposites to one another of their own divided persuasions, with the threats of Hell and Damnation ; and meet almost as many Anathemas, as when they remained Infidels !”

But here again we have been sadly mistaken ; for we shall find upon examination, that *Christianity* was never intended to prejudice either *Jews* or *Heathens*, much less erroneous *Christians* ; and is as extensive as the Promise first made to *Abraham*, that in his seed should all the families of the Earth be blessed ; and afterwards to *Christ*, that God would make him his Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth. It deprived no other Religion of any advantages it had before ; but

only added fresh instruction and fresh motives to a virtuous practice : and the Principles upon which it is founded extend to all Mankind (*b*) ; not only those who receive the *Christian* doctrine, but those who never heard of it ; as I shall undertake to prove. And,

1. The notion of confining the benefits of *Christ's* Mediation to the Covenants entered into by Circumcision and Baptism, is absolutely contrary to the promise given to *Abraham* ; which extended to all the families of the Earth. And as this promise was made before Circumcision, there can be no plea for confining it to those who were circumcised ; nor consequently to the *Christians*, who succeed into their Peculiarity ; as keepers of the Oracles of God (*c*). For, being *prior* to such Peculiarity, no Law that was made afterwards could supersede it ; as *St. Paul* argues (*d*) : And had *Abraham* imagined, that the promise given to him in *Isaac*, was to deprive all the rest of his Posterity by *Hagar*, *Keturah*, &c. of eternal Life ; he would have looked upon it as the greatest Curse that could have been threaten'd him.

2. Though the *Messiah* was to be born of the line of *Isaac*, and the Oracles of God were committed to that line ; yet the Providence of God

(*b*) *Tit.* iii. 4.—*I John* iv. 9, 10, 11, 14, 19.

(*c*) Compare *Rom.* ix. 4. with *Rom.* iii. 2.

(*d*) *Rom.* iv. 13. *Gal.* iii. 17.

over mankind is not so confined, nor the Knowledge of the divine Revelations : for these were certainly known to all the family of *Abraham* ; and the Angel *Jehovah* appeared to *Hagar* and *Ismael* ; and *Melchisedek* was Priest of the Most High God, though no Covenant, that we know of, was ever made with him ; and the Prophets of God were sent to *Nineveh*, and *Babylon*, and other Countries. And therefore, when *St. Paul* speaks of the superior advantages of the *Jewish* nation, he never offers to say ; that they only, who were in the Covenant by Circumcision, should receive eternal Life : but the chief advantage was this, that unto them were committed the Oracles of God ; while the Heathen in the mean time were not acquainted with the benefits which were designed for them, and are therefore said to be left to the uncovenanted Mercies of God ; which some *Christians* look upon as a *desperate* and *forlorn* Hope(*e*). But the decrees of God are not void and impotent, be-

(*e*) *Mrs. Macaulay* quotes the following words from a Speech of *Oliver Cromwell* :—If we deny the spirit of *Jesus Christ* the glory of all his Works, by which he rules Kingdoms, &c. we provoke the Mediator : and he may say—I'll leave you to God—I'll not intercede for you—let him tear you to pieces—I'll leave thee to fall into God's hands—Thou deniest me my Sovereignty and Power committed to me—I'll not intercede and mediate for Thee—Thou fallest into the hands of the living God. *Hist. Vol. 5. p. 150.*
cause

cause they are unknown. The Heathens did not know the decree of God, that they should all arise from the grave (*f*); and yet, this will as certainly come to pass; as if it had been no less plainly revealed to them, than it has been to the *Christians*.

3. The Extent of *Christ's* Mediation is declared in the new Testament to be commensurate to the Promise made to *Abraham*: nor indeed could it be otherwise; being the method by which that Promise is to be compleated. *Christ* is declared to be the Propitiation [*ἱλασμός*] for the Sins of the *whole* World(*g*). He is called the Saviour of the World (*h*); which means the same thing. And by his Righteousness the free Gift came upon *all* men, unto Justification of Life (*i*): He is said by the grace of God to have tasted death for *every* man (*k*); and God is said to be no Respector of Persons (*l*); but in *every* Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him(*m*). All this shews plainly, that *Christ* came into the World to save *all* Mankind; whether *Heathens*, *Jews* or *Christians*: that his Redemption was *universal*; and, consequently, *all* men will have eternal Life; who practise Righteousness: *Rom.* iv.

(*f*) *Mat.* xxv. 41. (*g*) *John* ii. 2. (*h*) *I John*
iv. 4. (*i*) *Rom.* v. 18. (*k*) *Heb.* ii. 9. (*l*) *Rom.*
ii. 11. (*m*) *Acts* i. 35.

9, 10. for to these he has confined it, by the Terms of Salvation.

4. And this is confirmed by the account, which *Christ* himself gives of the future Judgment. “For the hour is coming, and now is; in which *all* that are in the graves shall hear his voice [the voice of the Son of Man], and shall come forth; they, that have done good, unto the resurrection of Life; and they, that have done evil to the resurrection of Damnation(*n*).” And the same account we find in *St. Matthew*; where the general Judgment is again described: and no distinction made among mankind, whether *Christians*, *Jews*, or *Heathens*; but merely as to their moral Characters. Those, who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, lodged the stranger, cloathed the naked, visited the sick and imprisoned, are set on the right hand; and denominated *Righteous*: and those, who are destitute of these virtues, are set on the left-hand; and denominated *Wicked*: and, it is declared, without any farther distinction, as the final Sentence; “These shall go into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal(*o*).”

But

(*n*) *John* v. 28.

(*o*) *Mat.* xxv. 46. *Limborch* in his *Amica Collatio*, p. 333. says; If any among the *Gentiles* lived honestly, according to the Law of Nature; It is credible, that a munificent and benevolent God will not leave their Pro-
bity

But all these Texts some *Christians* explain away from a *general* to a *confined* Sense. By the Saviour of the *World*, they understand the Saviour of *Christians*; by the free gift coming upon *all Men*, they mean upon *all Christians*; by a propitiation for the sins of the *whole World*, they mean the *World of Believers*. And though they allow, that all Men shall arise from the dead, both Heathens and Christians, to stand before the Judgment seat of *Christ*; yet when it is added, “they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of Life;” they confine the expression to those only, who are in Covenant with God: and in like manner arbitrarily explain all other Texts of Scripture upon the subject.

To all which it may be answered: If all the Heathens are redeemed from Death by *Christ*; and thereby receive *one* benefit of the *Christian* Covenant, and that a most material one: then the effect of *Christ*’s death is not confined to the Covenants; but reaches, in *one* of its main branches, to the whole Heathen World. And, if this be the case; the *Christians* can have no right to confine the effects of it, in its *other* branches; unless they can shew some good Reason, why they presume to do it; and bring some

bity unhonoured; and that they will receive some part in a future Life: but what or how great, I cannot pretend to say.

Texts,

Texts, which shall make a plain exception against the eternal Life of the virtuous Heathens; and prove, that the general expressions already quoted must *necessarily* be so confined, and that the Heathens are to stand before the Judgment seat of *Christ*, merely to be condemned; without any regard to their actions. But such Texts are no where to be found.

On the contrary; these *Christians*, instead of giving their Reasons why they confine the general words of Scripture, which speak of *all mankind*, to the *Christians* only; seem to expect that their opponents shall not only produce these general expressions on their side of the question; but others also of a more particular nature, wherein the eternal Life of the virtuous Heathens is spoken-of alone, without being included in such general Terms.

Now this expectation, if we reflect upon it, must appear to be most unreasonable; from the very nature of the thing: Because it could very seldom, if ever, fall-in with the purpose of *Christ* or his Apostles, when calling men to enter into the Kingdom of *Christ*, to make any particular mention of the Salvation of those, who should never hear of any such Kingdom: and, when they were persuading men of the benefits of *Christ's* Revelation, to such as would receive his doctrine; to inform

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them of the benefits of his Mediation, to such as they were not preaching to. These opportunities could happen very seldom; and the necessity of mentioning it, when it might accidentally fall-in, be much less frequent. And therefore, it is no wonder, if the Texts to that purpose should not be numerous; it is more wonderful, that there should be any at all. However, those that we have are sufficiently express; and much more determinate, than could be expected.—The first that I shall mention is in the Epistle to *Timothy*.

1. “He is the Saviour of *all* Men; especially of those that believe(*p*). The Salvation here spoken-of, if we look into the context, hath the promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come; for it refers-to that faithful saying, which is contained in the 8th verse. Here then we have a plain Text; in which the blessings of a future Life, though more especially belonging to *those that believed*, are yet promised to *all* Men; and, consequently, to some *who did not believe*.

2. This is confirmed by St. *John*. “He is the Propitiation for *our* Sins: and not for *ours* only, but for the Sins of the *whole* World (*q*):” upon which I will give you the reasoning of the

(*p*) I *Tim.* iv. 10. See Dr. *Whitby*’s note upon this passage.

(*q*) I *Jo.* ii. 2.

learned *Robert Barclay*, in his *Apology*. “The way which our adversaries take to evade this Testimony, is most foolish and ridiculous. The World, here, say they, is *the World of Believers*: For this Commentary we have nothing but their own assertion; and so, while it manifestly destroys the Text, may be justly rejected. For, first, let them shew me, if they can, in all the Scripture; where the *whole World* is taken for *Believers only*: I shall shew them, where it is many times taken for the quite contrary.—As, the *World* knows me not, I am not of this *World*(*r*); &c(*s*).” Secondly, the Apostle in this very place contra-distinguisheth the *World* from the *Saints*, thus; “And not for *ours only*, but for the Sins of the *whole World*.” What means the Apostle by *ours* here? is not that the Sins of Believers? was not he one of those Believers? and was not this an universal Epistle, written to all the Saints that then were? So that, according to these mens Comment, there should be a very unnecessary and foolish Redundancy in the Apostle’s words; as if he had said, he is the Propitiation not only for the *Sins of all Be-*

(*r*) I *Jo.* v. 19. the whole World lieth in Wickedness. See *Whitby* on I *Jo.* ii. 2.

(*s*) *Pf.* xvii. 14. *Is.* xiii. 11. *Matt.* xviii. 7. *Jo.* vii. 7. viii. 26. xii. 19. xiv. 17. xv. 18, 19. xvii. 14. xviii. 20. I *Cor.* i. 21. ii. 12. vi. 2. *Gal.* vi. 14. *Ja.* i. 27. II *Pet.* ii. 20. I *Jo.* ii 15. iii. 1. iv. 4, 5, and many others.

lievers; but also for the *Sins of all Believers*. Is not this to make the Apostle's words void of good sense? Let them shew us, where ever there is such a manner of speaking in all the Scripture; where any of the Penmen first name the Believers *in concreto* with themselves, and then contra-distinguish them from some other *whole World* of Believers: That *whole World*, if it be of Believers, must not be the World we live in. But we need no better interpreter for the Apostle, than himself; who uses the very same expression and phrase, in the same epistle; (ch. v. 19.) saying, We know, that *we* are of God; and the *whole World* lieth in Wickedness. There cannot be found in all the Scripture, two places which run more parallel; seeing in both, the same Apostle, in the same Epistle, to the same Persons, contra-distinguisheth *himself* and the *Saints* to whom he writes, from the *whole World*; which, according to these mens Commentary, ought to be understood of *Believers*: as if *John*; had said; we know, that *particular* believers are of God; but the *whole World* of believers lieth in wickedness. What absurd wresting of Scripture is this? and yet it may as well be pleaded-for, as the other; for they differ not at all. Seeing then that the Apostle *John* tells us plainly; that *Christ* not only died for *him*, and for the Saints and Members of the Church of God to whom he wrote; but for the *whole World*: let
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us then hold it for a certain and undoubted Truth; notwithstanding the Cavils of such as oppose(*t*)."

To this I shall add the Words and Reasoning of St. *Paul*, in the second Chapter to the *Romans*(*u*). "God will render to every Man, according to his Deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal Life:" and again; "glory and honour and peace, to every one that worketh good; to the *Jew* first, and also to the *Gentile*: for there is no Respect of Persons with God, &c." The Apostle does not speak here of the *Gentiles*, who have received the Gospel; but of those, who having no [revealed] Law, were a Law unto themselves: (verse 14) of whom he declares, that by patient continuance in well-doing they shall receive eternal Life (ver. 6. 7. 11). The Argument relates to the *Jews* and *Heathens*, while they continued such; and proves, that if the Uncircumcision keep the Law, it shall be counted for Circumcision: (ver. 26.) and the reason he gives is, because they do by Nature (the same Nature which they received from God) the things contained in the Law; and it will not be the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the

(*t*) *Barclay's Apol.* p. 123, &c.

(*u*) *Ro.* ii. 6, &c. 11, &c. 14.

Law, that will be justified : (verse 13.) and, if that be the case, there can be no question, but the virtuous *Heathen* shall receive the same reward as the virtuous *Christian* ; especially, as they will be both judged by the same Rule. For the Uncircumcision (which *St. Paul* here speaks-of as keeping the Law ; that is, the moral Law, or the Law of Reason and Nature ; verse 15.) being counted for Circumcision, can mean no less than being entitled to the benefits of the Covenant ; and, consequently, the virtuous Heathen will be equally rewarded with eternal Life, as the virtuous *Christian*.

Mr. *Barclay*, just quoted, argues thus unanswerably(x). In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted : but many of the Heathens feared God, and worked Righteousness : therefore many of the Heathens are accepted.

The *Minor* he proves, from the example of *Cornelius* ; and farther thus. He, that doth the things contained in the Law ; feareth God, and worketh Righteousness : but the Heathens did the things contained in the Law : therefore they feared God, and worked Righteousness—Again ; he argues, from the 13th verse ; without adding a word of his own, as he observes. “ The doers of the Law shall be justified : but the Gentiles

(x) *Barclay*. p. 188, 189.

do the things contained in the Law: therefore the Gentiles shall be justified."

§ 7. But to all these declarations of *Christ* and his Apostles, it is objected by some; that our Salvation, or the terms of our Acceptance, do not depend upon our Actions; but upon our *Faith*: and, to prove this, they quote the following Text—"He, that *believeth* and is baptized, shall be saved; but He, that *believeth* not shall be damned(y).

I shall first prove, from the reason and nature of the thing, that this Conclusion must be false: and then shew, that the Text here quoted, does not relate to a future Judgement; but to the admission of the *Christian* Converts into the Church of *Christ* on Earth.

And *first* I argue; that, if *Adam* had not sinned, eternal Life would have been the reward of his Righteousness; for Death entered by Sin, and without Sin there would have been no such thing; and no other Faith would have been necessary, but a belief in God; and the belief in *Christ* became necessary, not as an End; but a Means to bring us back to the practice of Righteousness, upon which eternal Life was at first promised to *Adam*: And therefore, as the End is superior to the Means, so Righteousness or Obedience is superior to Faith in *Christ*. And, accordingly, though Righteousness, without Faith

(y) *Mark* xvi. 16.

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in *Christ*, had the promise of eternal Life annexed to it; as in the instance of *Adam*: yet Faith, *without Righteousness*, can have no such Privilege; because at the end of the world the Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and shall gather out of his Kingdom all Scandals, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire(z). [And this will be the fate of some; whose Faith was so great, as not only to admit them into the *Christian Church*; but to work Miracles in the name of *Christ*!] and he shall say; depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity. In all such, their *Faith* will be so far from saving them(a); that it will aggravate their condemnation, because they knew their Master's will and did it not.

If it be urged, that *Abraham* was saved by *Faith*; St. *James* has given the answer, that “by *Works* was his Faith made perfect(b); and that which makes perfect is of a superior quality: so that Righteousness is superior to Faith, as Holiness to the Lord was superior to Sacrifice, and made-up for the defects of it(c). The Faith of

(z) *Matt.* xiii. 41, 42.

(a) When the Word *Salvation* in the new Testament means no more than an Entrance into the *Christian Church*, nothing more is necessary to it than *Faith*: but when *Salvation* means eternal Life, Faith is never spoken-of in the Scriptures as sufficient; but the *Obedience of Faith*: as in *Rom.* xvi. 26. See *Taylor on the Romans*, p. 97.

(b) *James* ii. 22.

(c) *Exod.* xxviii. 36.

Abraham consisted not merely in *believing* God, but in *obeying* him; as appears from the several instances which the Apostle gives of it, when he describes it as most highly meritorious. “By Faith *Abraham*, when he was called to go into a place which he should hereafter receive for an inheritance, obey’d(*d*)—by Faith he sojourned in the land of Promise—by Faith, when he was tried, he offered up his Son *Isaac*: and therefore St. *James* says, he was justified by *Works* (*e*): and St. *Paul*’s argument comes to the same Conclusion at last: for he tells us, that his *Faith* was counted to him for *Righteousness* (*f*); which is a plain concession, that it was his *Righteousness* that was rewarded; and that *Righteousness* is superior to *Faith*. For, if it were not so, the accounting his Faith for Righteousness, would not have been a Favour to him, but an Injury.

If the Text be urged, which says—“the Just shall live by Faith(*g*)”—the answer is, that it is a false Translation; and it should have been the Just by Faith shall live. The Context shews this to be the Sense of it; being thus connected—The Just by Faith shall live; for the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth [that is, the true

(*d*) *Heb.* xi. 8, 9, 17. (*e*) *James* ii. 24. (*f*) *Gen.* xv. 6. *Gal.* iii. 6. *Rom.* iv. 3. (*g*) *Rom.* i. 17. ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. *Gal.* iii. 2. *Heb.* x. 38. *Heb.* ii. 4.

Faith] in unrighteousness. Here we find, that those, who are Just by Faith, or whose Faith prevails on them to be just, shall live: but, on the other hand, those who hold the true Faith without that influence upon their conduct, shall suffer the wrath of God which is revealed against all such. This is a plain Argument; and, agreeable to this sense of it, the Apostle gives us a large Catalogue of such as had become righteous by their Faith. And thus the Text is interpreted by *Clemens Romanus* (*b*); but, in the *English* translation, this sense of the words is lost.

But, whatever reward the Faith of *Abraham* received; by being accounted to him for *Righteousness*, which it brought forth; it was certainly no belief in any thing that was revealed by *Christ*, but a belief and obedience to God: And this was the Faith of the virtuous Heathens, and produced the same Effect; that is, Obedience. The belief of a God from the evidence of his Works, was the Faith of the wiser Heathens; and this, together with a belief of the particular Revelation which he received from God, was the Faith of *Abraham*; and the belief of a *Christian* Revelation is the Faith of a *Christian*. Each of these believe all that can be expected from them, upon the Evidence that God has laid be-

(*b*) *Ad. Corin. Ox. Ed. 1669. p. 71. τίνος χάριν εὐλογήθη ὁ πατήρ Ἀβραάμ; ἐχὼν δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀλήθειαν διὰ πίστεως ποιήσας;*

fore them; and the intrinsic Virtue of *Faith* can consist in nothing else, but a Readiness to believe and practise whatever appears upon good Evidence to be revealed by *Him*. And therefore *Christ* resolves all Faith in *Him* into a belief in *God*: He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on him that sent Me⁽ⁱ⁾; which it is certain *Christ* would not have said, if Faith in *Him* had been more meritorious than Faith in *God*. And to the same purpose he says; verily, verily, I say unto you; he that heareth my word, and believeth on *him that sent me*, hath everlasting Life; and shall not come into Condemnation, but hath passed from Death unto Life^(k); where again we see, that Faith in *God* is spoken-of, as having the same effect with Faith in *Christ*. And in this Faith or Belief in *God*, there were many of the virtuous Heathens who were by no means deficient. I shall only mention the Faith of *Socrates*.

“ This is that *Socrates*, says *Ludovicus Vives*^(l), of whom nothing can be sufficiently said for his Dignity; who, as is manifest, was the wisest of all the *Greeks*; and came nearest to the *Christian* Wisdom. He was a man, temperate, chaste, just, modest, patient of injuries, not greedy of riches, pleasure, no nor of glory.” *Justin Martyr* does not scruple to call him a *Christian*;

⁽ⁱ⁾ *John* xii. 44.
de Civ. Dei, L. viii. c. 2.

^(k) *John* v. 24.

^(l) in *Aug.*

saying, all such as lived according to the divine word in them, which was in all men(*m*), were *Christians*; such as *Socrates*, and *Heraclitus*, and others among the *Greeks*.

Xenophon, who was also an excellent man, hath given us this account of the Faith of *Socrates*; he believed, that the Providence of *God* extended over all things; and directed every thing, as he pleased (*n*): and that it is our duty, to worship him; and the most acceptable Worship that can be paid to him is an Obedience to his commands (*o*): and that he, who strives with all his power to please him, hath good reason to take courage; and expect the greatest blessings from him(*p*). This Faith agrees entirely with the description which *St. Paul* hath given us, of that Faith which is necessary to please God. Without Faith, says he, it is impossible to please God; for he, that cometh unto God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him(*q*). Now, as no reason can be given; why Faith in God the *Father* is not of as great merit, as Faith in God the *Son*; it remains, that the Righteousness of *Socrates*, which arose from Faith in *God*, will be as highly rewarded; as the same degree of Righteousness, which arises from Faith in *Christ*. Most certainly it

(*m*) *John* i. 9.

(*n*) *Xenoph.* Mem. 1, 4, 17, 18.

(*o*) *Ib.* 4, 3, 16.

(*p*) *Ib.* 17.

(*q*) *Heb.* xi. 6.

can be no good reason, why it should obtain a less reward; *merely* that it attained to the *same* perfection, under *greater* difficulties and disadvantages.

Mr. *Chillingworth* (r) argues, as follows. "If without this belief, that *God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him*, God will not be pleased; then his Will is, that we should believe it: now, it is possible; that they, who never heard of *Christ*, may seek God: therefore, it is true; that even they shall please him, and be rewarded by him." And however Mr. *Chillingworth* uses this argument only with respect to such as are brought to the Faith afterwards; it equally concludes for those, who never heard of *Christ*. And it is equally absurd to imagine; because the Heathens are spoken-of *in general*, as at *enmity* with God; that therefore *every individual*, such as *Socrates, Heraclitus, Xenophon, Marcus Antoninus, &c.* must have been at *enmity* with him; as to imagine, every individual among the *Jews and Christians* is *holy*; because they are called collectively a *holy* people.

There remains to be considered the Text, which is quoted, on the other side of the question, from the Gospel of St. *Mark*; "He, that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he, that believeth not, shall be damned(s)."

(r) *Relig. of Prot.* ch. iii. sect. 13.

(s) *Mark* xvi. 16.

These words, though so often applied to a future Judgement, do not appear to have any relation to it; but only to the Admission of the *Christian* Converts into the *Christian* Church, after *Christ*'s ascension; upon the same Terms as he admitted them himself. *Christ* was now leaving this World; and giving Commission to his Disciples what to do after his departure from them. In which Commission we find he gives Them the same powers, which He himself had exercised; and orders them to use them in the same manner. He tells them to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every Creature; and adds, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.

Now the first part of this Text [he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved] answers directly to the declaration of forgiveness to all such as believed in him, (upon their receiving him as the *Messiah*;) when, upon their Conversion, their Sins were immediately forgiven them (*t*): and to the very design of the Gospel; which was to reconcile the World to God, by declaring his good-will to men in forgiving their Iniquities(*u*). And it was equivalent to the expression used by *Christ* to a certain woman that believed on him; and at other times; “thy

(*t*) *Mark*, iv. 12. *Matt.* ix. 2, &c.
iii. 25.

(*u*) *Rom.*

Faith hath saved thee; go in Peace(x).” And the latter part of the verse; [he that believeth not shall be damned; that is, *condemned* or accountable for his Sins;] answers to the denunciation, which *Christ* had often made against those who would not receive him; that they should die in their Sins. Thus the Evangelist recites the words of *Christ* to *Nicodemus*: He that believeth on him, (the Son of God) is not condemned; (οὐ κέκρίται.) but he that believeth not, is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God(y). And what this Damnation, or Condemnation, was; we see *John* viii. 24. I said therefore unto you, ye shall die in your Sins: and this is the only sense the words are capable of, consistent with the Context, with the Subject that *Christ* was speaking to; and with the other parts of the Gospel. And the same seems to be the sense of those other Texts, which have made so much noise and disturbance in the *Christian* Church; “whose Sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose Sins ye retain, they are retained(z):” and again, “I will give unto you the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,” says *Christ* to *Peter*; “and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall

(x) *Luke* vii. 5. *Matt.* ix. 22, &c.

(y) *John* iii. 18, &c. v. 24.

(z) *John* xx. 23.

be loosed in Heaven(*a*).” All these Texts relate to the same point and purpose; viz. to declare that, upon the first receiving the *Christian* Religion, *Christ*, and afterwards the Apostles in his name, *forgave* those that believed, and were baptized; and what was then done here, would be confirmed in Heaven: but they have no relation at all to their acquittal or condemnation at *the day of Judgement*; at which time, every man will be judged according to his Works; and according to what he hath received.

§ 8. But here it has been argued, by the enemies of Revelation; (such is the perverseness of Mankind!) that, every Man will be equally well pleasing to God, who does as well as he can; or is equally *sincere*: and, consequently, will be equally rewarded; whether with or without a Revelation. I answer; There is no doubt, but that he who has performed his Duty, according to the best Light he can procure; beyond which Man cannot go, nor God demand his service(*b*); will gain the favour of God, and be accepted by him: but no reason can be drawn from hence, to prove; that another, who has greater abilities and opportunities, and has by the proper use of them done more good and acceptable works, and has actu-

(*a*) *Mat.* xvi. 19. (*b*) See *Hoadly's* answer to *Hare*, in the *Postf.* to the Bp. of *Oxford*, p. 223. Octavo Ed.

ally carried-on the designs of God more punctually and perfectly; will not thereby deserve a greater Reward, and receive according to his *real work and labour*. If this were not the case, "all the Writings of Philosophers and Moralists, all the Instructions that have been ever given to Mankind, in matters of Religion and Morality; would have been perfectly needless, and of no use(c)." Nay, the case would be better with the most ignorant Savages, than the most enlighten'd *Christians*; for the latter would be liable to severer Punishment, if they neglected their duties; and yet entitled to no greater a reward, if they performed them. But the Truth is far otherwise: for, though Sincerity recommends all men to the favour of God, whether their Abilities and Talents be more or less; yet it by no means prevents a variety of Stations and Rewards: because we shall be judged according to our Works, or the actual Use we have made of our superior Talents. And therefore it must be of infinite Consequence for us to be rightly informed of the Will of God; that we may the better know how to please him. For it is the Knowledge of the Truth, with regard to the Being, Attributes and Providence of God, and the nature of moral Rectitude, and moral Obligation; which gives *life and activity*

(c) *Leland's View*, &c. vol. I. p. 158.

to that very Sincerity, upon which our acceptance with God is founded: and it is by the regular and constant practise of those Principles of Truth and Righteousness, which we know or believe; that we improve in moral Excellence, and attain to a praise-worthy Character.

The knowledge of *Christianity* was therefore of greater use to those to whom it was revealed, than can be easily conceived; as they were thereby delivered out of a state of Darkness, Ignorance, and Superstition, into a marvelous Light; with regard to the Unity of God, and his moral Attributes, and the history of his Providence, and the nature of moral Perfection, and the promise of eternal Life to the Righteous.

I envy not the powers of mind, how great soever, which the Heathen Philosophers enjoyed: they were of great service to Virtue without doubt, as far as they were studied and understood; and made the world more inquisitive after Truth, and more capable of examining into the worth and dignity of the *Christian* Revelation. But they neither preached the true doctrine of the one God, nor had they a complete notion of Morality, nor authority to enjoin the practise of it upon substantial motives; nor liberty to preach what they believed; nor could their doctrines have reached to the bulk of Mankind; for the established Religion was a
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Contradiction to their Philosophy: and there was no likelihood of their reforming the Notions, or amending the Practice, of the common people; while the Gods they worshipped were looked-upon to be such monsters of Immorality of every kind; and even the Philosophers themselves agreed in the outward forms of worship, and in the general Maxim, that the Religion of the Country should always be complied-with. These defects remained to be supplied by a divine Revelation.—

And the plain History of God's Providence over Mankind from the beginning of the world, gave men, at one view, a Love and Admiration of *his* Perfections; and a sovereign Contempt of the heathen Deities, and all *their* Imperfections. And whatever had been said by their best Writers upon the nature of moral Duties, fell infinitely short of that perfection of Godliness, in the example which *Christ* has set before us; in leaving the glory and happiness of Heaven, and humbling himself to take upon him the form of a Servant, and to suffer indignity, pain and death, for our Salvation. For why? this Conduct did not arise from the sense of *moral Obligation*, but from the *more noble* principle of Benevolence and Love.

As these things gave men a more exalted notion of Virtue and Goodness; so the motives to live according to this more perfect exemplar,

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were more powerful, than any that could be collected from Philosophy; and enabled them to go through all Trials and Difficulties, in order to propagate the Truth. The Philosophers did not know, whether eternal Life was to be the lot of pious men; whether it was the *original* design of God, when he created the world; nor whether they should obtain it by a virtuous Life: They *did* know, that it would not follow from his *Justice*; because no man had merited it: and their notion of his *Goodness* was very confused. Whereas in the *Christian* Revelation we find; that a future state and kingdom was the *original* design of God, when he created us; and that he hath constituted *Jesus Christ* to be the Lord and King of it; in which he will reward his sincere followers with life and happiness. The knowledge of these things hath connected our Duty with our Interest; a thing so much wanted among the Heathens, to give life and energy to their virtuous Principles: and the *Certainty* of a Resurrection to Life, the most powerful of all motives to a virtuous Practice; (the bare Hope of which among them depended entirely upon uncertain conclusions from more uncertain premises :) is become among the *Christians* an undoubted article of *Faith*; founded upon plain *Fact*, and consequently level to the apprehension of all men; and made the grand and universal Motive of Religious Conduct.

Conduct. So that, though God winked at the former times of Ignorance; yet, when he revealed to the Heathens, that he had appointed a day, in which he would judge the world in righteousness; he at the same time supplied them with a clearer notion of moral Excellence, than they had before; and with stronger motives to the practice of Virtue.

Who can read without Emotion the dying words of *Socrates*, the greatest Light of the Heathens, upon this subject? "I have great hopes, says he; that it is better for me, to be condemned to die; For either Death deprives us of all Thought, or it is the passage to another Country. If it be merely a privation of Sense, like a sound and unmolested Sleep; then Death is Gain: for how few days are preferable to such a Night! But if it be a passage into the regions which are inhabited by those, who have passed through life; and we shall there meet with such, as have lived piously and justly; how delightful is the thought of such a Journey! What a pleasure to mix with such a Society! Surely I would go through many Deaths, to experience this Truth." How noble and generous are these sentiments! But, when *St. Paul* considers the same Subject, with what superior Majesty does the Scene open; and discover to our view, without the least appearance of doubt to cast a shade upon any part of it, the enlivening

vening Prospect of Glory and Honour and Immortality within our Reach?—We are come, says he, to the City of the living God, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and to an innumerable Company of Angels; to the general Assembly and Church of the first-born, which are enrolled in Heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the Spirits of just men made perfect; and to *Jesus*, the Mediator of the new Covenant. *Heb. xii.*

§ 9. But, in answer to all that can be said in favour of *Christianity*, as designed and calculated to improve Mankind; the Deists have formed two of their most capital Objections. If God, say they, was *always* willing that *all* Men should be saved; and *Christ* came into the World, to *reform* it from its Errors, and introduce Virtue and Righteousness; how comes it to pass, that we see no such Reformation made; but the *Christians* are as bad as other men? Or, if it be said, that *Christianity* has produced such an extraordinary effect; then, Why was not the *Christian* Revelation given *sooner*? why has it made so little *progress* in the world? why was it not *universal*? how could those be reformed and saved by *Christ*, who never heard of him?

1. If *Christ* came into the world to reform it, and introduce Virtue and Righteousness; this, they allow, would have been a noble Scheme indeed: but where, say they, is there any appearance

pearance of such an extraordinary effect upon the conduct of the *Christians*? we don't see, that they are better than other Men. What good then hath the death of *Christ* done; if the World is no better than it was before?

I shall not stay here to examine, whether this be a true or a false representation of the *Fact*, but only observe that, if the World is not improved by the Christian Revelation, it is entirely owing to their not observing its Precepts; and, that all arguments against Revelation, founded upon the supposition that it was designed to make Men virtuous, and hath not done so; and, therefore, could not come from God; may be as strongly urged against Reason, as against Revelation: and, consequently, they are not the proper Objections of a *Deist*; but of an *Atheist*. However, let the Objection come from the one or the other, it is equally weak and trifling. God Almighty reveals himself to Men, as to rational Beings and moral Agents; capable of receiving and making a proper use of this, as well as all his other blessings; but, if they will not make use of them to the purpose for which he designed them, and to which their own understanding was able to have directed them; what can be more trifling than to urge this as a proof, that God did not send them such blessings; or that he did not send them to such ends and uses. Has a man no Eyes, or no Understanding;

standing; whenever he refuses to make use of them?

The Assertion, that God was always willing that *all* Men should be saved, and that *all* Men should come to the knowledge of the Truth, &c. if taken in an *absolute* sense; as if God was willing that all Men should be saved, *whether they would obey his commands or not*; and that all Men should come to the knowledge of the Truth, *whether they would receive his instruction or not*; is a false representation of things. God never designed that any should be saved, or come to the knowledge of the Truth; but those, who would use the proper means to that end, when he had put it into their power. Again; where does the Deist find in Scripture, in what degree *Christ* was, at his first coming, to make a Reformation of Mankind; how far it was to extend in any given time; that he should pretend to avail himself of such knowledge, and conclude that the End of his coming into the world has not been fulfilled? God, no doubt, designed his Prophecies concerning the Person and Character of the *Messiah*, to be the ground of our Faith in him, when he should come; and yet, when he was now soon to appear, what says the Prophet *Isaiab*?—Who hath believed our Report?—And, in like manner, though *Christ* has revealed the will of God, and given the strongest Evidence to the divinity of his Mission; yet
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the Scripture never gives us the least intimation, that the World shall be so improved by it; as to be ready to receive Him, at his *second* appearance; on the contrary, *Christ* himself questions, whether, when the son of Man cometh, he shall find Faith on the earth; the force of all this Evidence will, by the carelessness and folly and wickedness of Men, be so far impaired and lost. The *first* coming of *Christ*, considered merely as to the Revelation then given, was of the same Nature with former Revelations; and still continues to have its effects upon all, who sincerely believe it; be the number great or small: but it was never designed to reform and amend those, who would not receive it. And *Christ* himself has taught us, by his Prophet; how to reason properly upon this Subject, and not be discouraged at Appearances; when he laments the ill Success of his own Ministry, and then informs us of its happy Consequences. “Then I said, I have laboured in vain; I have spent my Strength for nought, and in vain: yet, surely, my judgement is with the Lord; and my work with my God. And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his Servant, to bring *Jacob* again to him; though *Israel* be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord; and my God shall be my strength. And he said; it is a light thing that thou shouldst be my Servant, to raise-up the tribes of *Jacob*,

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and to restore the preserved of *Israel*; I will give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayst be my Salvation unto the ends of the Earth.—Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship,” &c(*d*).

But was the Reformation of the world the *only* or even the *chief* End, for which *Christ* came and died? an end, that might, for any thing that appears, have been as fully compleated by his sitting upon the throne of *David*, and sending forth his laws to all the earth with Power and Authority; as he will probably do, at his *second* coming to restore the Theocracy? or does the new Testament teach us, that a single Person will be saved by an exact Obedience to what he taught us? so far from it; that it assures us, our Salvation depends upon the Righteousness of *Christ*; and the Power *he* received, in reward of it, to dispense Salvation as a free Gift: For it is *Christ* alone, that gives eternal Life; our own Righteousness only renders us fit objects of that free Gift.

The *chief* end of *Christ*'s Humiliation and Death was not, therefore, so immediately for the sake of what he revealed, as of what he performed: not so much to reform the world by what he then preached, as to consummate the Prophet; and thereby gain to himself those powers, by which he became a Prince and a Sa-

(*d*) *Is.* xlix.

viour;

viour; and upon which the Accomplishment of all the extraordinary Prophecies of the happy state of the Church in future ages, to which the Prophecy of *Isaiab* just quoted particularly relates, entirely depend: and there are millions of Souls, who will be brought to Happiness by him, as a *Prince* and a *Saviour*; who never heard of him, as a *Prophet*; nor of any of his Revelations. And accordingly, Sir *Isaac Newton*(e) clearly distinguishes between the things that were to be done at the first and second Coming of *Christ*. “In the first, he comes as a Prophet; in the second, as a King: in the first, the Prophet was consummated, and the most holy anointed; in the second, he comes to be a Prince and reign:” to which may be added; in the first, he came to merit and gain the Powers necessary to constitute him a Saviour; in the second, he will come to exercise and employ those Powers: and the latter character of a Prince and King, is the Reward of his actions as a Prophet. “And as the few and obscure Prophecies concerning *Christ’s first* coming, were for setting-up the *Christian* Religion, which all Nations have since corrupted; so the many and clear Prophecies concerning the things to be done at his *second* coming, are not only for predicting, but also for effecting, a Recovery of the long lost

(e) Sir *Isaac Newton* on the Prophecies, p. 132.

Truth; and setting-up a Kingdom, wherein dwelleth Righteousness(*f*).” And therefore, when the *Deists* insult the *Christians* with such kind of questions: what benefit have the Death and Sufferings of *Christ* procured, adequate to the extraordinary Nature of such an Event; if the World is not reformed by it? they are making Objections upon a subject, which they are wholly unacquainted with: they expect those things to be done, at his first coming in the Flesh; which are to be brought about by the completion of the Prophecies not yet fulfilled, which relate to his coming in the Clouds of Heaven; and those things to be compleated by him, as a Prophet; which are to be accomplished by him, as a Prince and a King: and, in considering the end and design of his first appearance in the state of Humility and Affliction, overlook the powers which he then gained by his meritorious Death and Sufferings; upon which the immediate Salvation of Righteous men entirely depends. So little do they know of the *Christian* Doctrines they oppose.

As to the second Question; Why was not the *Christian* Revelation given *sooner*? why was it not *universal*? and why has it made so little Progress in the world? and how can those be saved by *Christ*, who never heard of him? &c.—let

(*f*) Sir Isaac Newton, p. 252.

the *Deist* consider; that the Salvation of Men does not depend upon the Extent of the *Christian* Revelation, nor upon the Success of it, nor *when* it happened, or *where*; but upon the extent of *Christ's* Power, by which he became mighty to save. The *Redemption* is *universal*; though the *Revelation* is not: and the *Salvation* will extend to all who shall be fit to receive it. The Prophets, who came before *Christ*, declared the Will of God; and called men to Repentance, and the Practise of moral duties; as He did: and so did the Philosophers; who were raised-up by God to instruct Mankind: but They were not Saviours; for they wanted power to forgive and save. The Characters, therefore, are entirely different: and, as the *Prophets* were not *Saviours*; so we see, by the *partiality* of the Revelation, that, if it had pleased God, the *Messiah* might have been a *Saviour*; without being a *Prophet*. For, had he never given us any Laws at all, nor ever appeared in this World, nor revealed any thing concerning himself to any part of Mankind; but we had lived intirely ignorant of Him, as the *Patagonians*; yet, had he manifested a like Obedience to God in any other part of the Universe, and been thereupon rewarded and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour of Mankind; our Salvation at the day of Judgement might be accomplished in the same manner, as to the *efficient* cause, as it will be
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now; that is, by the exercise of those powers which he received, for that purpose, in reward of his Merits: and the effect of his Mediation be *universal*, as it is now.

We might indeed be very much alarmed; if we imagined the *Salvation*, which *Christ* brings, should reach no farther than his *Revelation* does: which was so many years before it came, and which all Nations have since corrupted, and which has made so little progress in the World for many ages, since the rise of the grand Apostasy. But as we are not saved by his *Revelation*, as a *Prophet*; but by his *Power*, as a *King*; the case is very different: and it does not avail, at what Age of the world, or in what Part of it, he by his Obedience gained the power of raising the dead, forgiving sin, and giving eternal Life; but upon his actual employment of that Power for our Salvation at the last day. So that though (in a restrained Sense, as I observed) it be true, that God was always willing, that all Men should be saved; yet a Revelation at all times, and in all places, was by no means necessary to that end. For, though *Christ* did not come into the world to suffer, till 4000 years after the Fall; yet the Power of his Salvation, which he gained by his Obedience when he *did* come, will be manifested at the last day over *all* ages and nations, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him, and the promise made to *Abraham*

ham fulfilled in the full extent of the words; though the *Revelation* given by God at sundry times, and in divers manners, be *ever so much* confined by the Perverseness of Mankind; or ever so much corrupted. And if the Deists in *this* Country would compare their own happy state, in regard to the many comforts they enjoy, superior to the miserable inhabitants of some *other* parts of the World; as well as in their Knowledge of *natural* Religion and *moral* Obligation; they would see, how absurd it is to imagine; that God has not a special right to bestow his blessings and free gifts upon different Nations or Societies of men, as he pleases; whether they will make a proper use of such Advantages, or no: or to cavil at the Providence of God; because a farther Knowledge of the methods of his Government, and nobler Principles of action and motives to Virtue, are revealed to *some* Men than to *others*.

But, while the *Deists* object to the superior Advantages of the *Christians* over the rest of Mankind, as being inconsistent with the impartiality of Providence; it must surely be absurd at the same time to object, that it is in the power of the *Christians* to lose those Advantages by their own neglect or wickedness; and so reduce themselves to a level with other Men. God cannot be expected to force his blessings upon them; wherher they will or no. And,
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The Causes, why *Christianity* has been *lost* in several parts of the world where it was once received; and *not received* in others, where it has been preached; are chiefly these two: first, the Corruption of its Doctrines; and secondly, the Wickedness of its Professors.

I. The Corruption of its Doctrines, as *Cyril* relates, was objected to the *Christians*, by the Emperor *Julian*, but a few years after the Council of *Nice*, in these Words; “Your adding to that *ancient* dead man *Jesus*, many *new* dead Men, who can sufficiently abominate?” And again; “if *Christians* had adhered to the precepts of the *Hebrews*; they would have worshipped *one* God, instead of *many*: and not a Man, or rather *many* unhappy Men. And he accuses them, that they adored the Wood of the Cross; making figures of it on their Foreheads, and before their Houses(g).” “And in the days of *Cyril* we find, that the Virgin *Mary* was called the Queen of Heaven, and the Mother of God; and so decreed to be, in the Councils of *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*; which are Tests of Heresy in *England*: and *Cyril* himself, who is said to have presided at the Council of *Ephesus*, made no Scruple to call Her the Complement or Supplement of the Holy Trinity; and the *Collyridians* worshipped her as God; and said, there

(g) Sir *Isaac Newton* on the Prophecies, p. 208.

were two Gods besides the Father; viz. *Christ* and the Virgin *Mary*(*b*)."

And the Impostor *Mahomet* not only objects to the *Christians*, that they associated their Doctors and Monks with Almighty God in their Worship: but he also accuses them of corrupting the Doctrine of the *Unity*, the fundamental Article of all true Religion; by their notions of the *Trinity*(*i*). And it must be confessed; that the *Christians* have at least so far obscured and unsettled this great Truth, by the decrees of their Councils; that many of the Learned, both ancient and modern, have been at a loss to know; whether they worship *one* Thing, or *three*; ἐν πρᾶγμα or τρία πρᾶγματα(*k*). For, in order to maintain the doctrine of the divine Fœcundity, as it was settled at the Council of *Nice*; we are told, that God is not *unicus*; (the only God); but only *unus* (one God): that this *Unity* is of so transcendental a nature, as not to come under Number(*l*); and that God is not one in *Number*, but only in *Nature*(*m*). Other *Christians*, on the other hand, declare; that

(*b*) Four Treatises, p. 174. *Epiph. Hær.* 75. 7. Lib. iii. *Sale's Koran*, p. 35.

(*i*) See Letter I. p. 16.

(*k*) Letter I. p. 61.

(*l*) *Allix*, Jew. Ch. 121, 168.

(*m*) *Basil*, and *Justin Martyr*. See Letter I. p. 167. These Writers mean'd to oppose the *Sabellian* Notion of *one* numerical substance: by maintaining *three* numerical substances of the same generical Nature; as, three Men are *one* in Nature, though *three* in Number.

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God

God is one, both in *Number*, and in *Nature*; one numerical Substance, consisting of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: which *Athanasius* and *Epiphanius* declare to be *Sabellianism*(*n*). Others say; that God is *three* Substances, joined together inseparably by an *Emperichoresis*; and that, if it was not for this *Emperichoresis*, there would be *three* Gods; and that no one of them is God, exclusive of the other two: (and if this be true, it must follow unavoidably; that, without this *Emperichoresis*, there would be no God at all :) and thus the very *Being* of God, as well as his *Unity*, is supposed to depend upon—we know not what—most certainly upon what does not come under our Idea of necessary Existence: and this, we are told by the Learned, was the doctrine of the *Nicene Council*(*o*). But others, in direct opposition to this, declare; that *every one* of them is of himself both God and Lord (*p*): which is condemned by *Athanasius*, *Bull*, *Petavius*, &c. as being Polytheism. *Athanasius* says; We do not acknowledge three *Hypostases*, divided or separate by themselves; that we may not comply with the Pagan Polytheism(*q*). And some divines have drawn the line of their Orthodoxy so nicely as to assert; that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are *three* and every one *distinctly* God; and yet deny that

(*n*) Letter I, Note viii. p. 166. (*o*) Let. I. p. 61, 219. (*p*) *Athanasian Creed*. (*q*) See *Cudworth*, p. 614. they

they are *three*, and every one a *distinct* God(*r*). These different Notions were brought into the Church, at different Times; as the *Sabellian*, *Athanasian*, or *Pseudo-Athanasian* Heresies prevailed; and are all of them established together, in some of the *Christian* Churches; as if they were all orthodox, and consistent with one another. The *first*, by the Council of *Lateran*(*s*); and by the second and fourth Articles agreed upon at *London* in 1562, and by the *proper Preface* in the Communion Service for *Trinity Sunday*: the *second* of them, by making the four first general Councils the Tests of Heresy (*t*): and the *third*, by the *Pseudo-Athanasian Creed*: for it seems to be a kind of Infatuation among the *Christians*, if it does not proceed from mere Carelessness; that there is not one of the *Western Churches*, but what pretends to follow the Faith of *Athanasius*; and yet they are every one of them condemned by him, (in their Principles,) as *Sabellians* and *Polytheists*.—The Confusion and Uncertainty of the *Christians*' Faith is no less; when they assert, that there are two Persons in the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father; from whom they received their Existence. For, if they mean by this, that there are three conscious Beings co-equal

(*r*) *Beverege*.

(*s*) See Let. I. p. 213. Note xx.

(*t*) *Blackstone's Comment*. Vol. IV. p. 49, 50. Letter I. p. 61.

and co-eternal ; they must necessarily mean three *Gods* : and, if they mean one Supreme God, under three different Characters ; they must allow, that the One Supreme God did suffer Pain and Death ; which is the Herefy of the *Patripassians* :—and, if they mean *three* unsubstantial Characters, or modes of Existence ; then they must hold, that it was a Character only, and not a real substantial Being, that suffered for Mankind ; and there can be no medium between a real Substance, and an unsubstantial Character or mode of Existence ; and therefore, to speak as some do, of a Character *WHO*—has no Meaning in it ; and is no Language. In short, the plain Doctrine of the *Unity*, viz. that God is One, and One only (*u*) ; which ought to be the first Article in *every Christian Church* ; has never been maintain'd in *any one* of them, without some reservation or explanation ; that has rendered it as doubtful, as if it had never been asserted.

The decrees of the Councils, upon these and such like questions, carried by a majority of votes, amidst riot and confusion ; gave rise to those *mysteries*, which Sir *Paul Ricaut* mentions ; when, speaking of the *Greeks* and *Turks* in the *Morea*, he owns ; that, “ if Education were the sole motive and principle, *Turcism* would sooner root than *Christianity* ; having opportunity equal,

(*u*) See the Definition of *Maimonides*, Let. I. p. 218.

and in easiness of things naturally to be believed the advantage before the *mysterious* doctrines of *our* Faith(x)." Again, he says: "the *Turks* do not decimate the *Christian* Children, as they used; because so many of them turn *Mahometans*: and of *other* parts and nations such numbers flock daily to the profession of *Turcism*; that there is no need of this unnatural addition, to increase the power and kingdom of the *Turk*(y). And to what can this be owing; but to the Corruptions which were introduced into the *Christian* Church, by apostatizing from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men!" It is urged also as another Reason, why *Mahometism* has been preferred to *Christianity*, that the Doctrines of the latter are of a more *Spiritual* nature, requiring greater *Purity* in our Practice: but this argument can be of little or no force, when the Doctrines of *Absolutions* and *Indulgences* are taken into the question. But I shall not anticipate here any farther what will be more fully considered in another Work(z).

It is certain Fact; that, while the *Christians* were employed in persecuting one another, because they could not agree in their inquiries into the metaphysical nature of Almighty God; and the solution of the above Difficulties, and many others of their own invention, which had

(x) *Greek and Armenian Churches*, p. 15.
p. 22.

(z) The VIIIth Letter.

(y) *Ibid.*

filled the Church with unintelligible and contradictory notions ; the *Mahometans*, by preaching up the plain Doctrine of the *Unity*, as it was revealed by *Moses* ; [that God is One, and One only ;] drew over, merely by the force of this one plain Truth, almost all *Asia* and *Africa* to the profession of their Religion.

I know, says the Author of *Reflections on Mahometism* ; that it is commonly said, the Religion of *Mahomet* was established by force of Arms ; and doing violence to people's Consciences. But this violence was not such as is commonly represented (*a*) ; and was not used, for the first twelve years ; nor till after persuasion had gained him a strong party to support his pretensions. Till that time he had propagated his Religion by fair means ; so that the whole Success of his enterprize, before his flight to *Medina*, must be attributed, as *Mr. Sale* observes, to Persuasion ; and not to Compulsion (*b*) : agreeably to what he declares in the *Koran*, *Let there be no violence in Religion* (*c*) ; though he afterwards practised it, following the example of the *Christians* ; who used the same method to propagate, not only the *Homöousian* Doctrine ; but also the genuine Apostolic Faith, which is generally misrepresented under the name of *Arianism* ; though held in the Church

(*a*) Four Treatises, p. 170.
49. (*c*) Ibid. ch. ii. p. 31.

(*b*) *Sale's Koran*, 48,

long before *Arius* was born.—Besides, we find ; that some *Tartarian* Princes, instructed first by the *Armenians*, and afterwards by the Monks, embraced the *Christian* Religion ; but in a very little time rejected it, and became *Mahometans*. And the King of *Macassar* in the great *Celebe* Island, being instructed by the Monks and Doctors of the *Mahometan* Law, preferred *Mahometism* to the *Romish* Religion(*d*). And, in 1246, Pope *Innocent* IV sent an Embassy to *Bati*, Cham of *Tartary* ; inviting him to the *Christian* Religion : but when the Cham heard the chief points of the *Christian* Faith, the Trinity, Incarnation, Transubstantiation, &c. he thanked the Pope for his kindness, and promised to make no incursion into the *Christian* Countries for five years ; but withall declared himself not well satisfied with *Christianity*, as it was represented to him : and immediately after, the *Saracens* sent a like Embassy to *Bati* ; recommending to him *Mahometism*, as the more plausible Sect ; and the whole nation of the *Tartars*, submitted to *Mahometism* ; in which they continue to this day(*e*). And Mr. *Morgan*, in his history of *Barbary*, which makes the same observation with regard to the *Africans* ; that they were not reduced from *Paganism*, by mere force of Arms ; but because they liked the measures taken by

(*d*) Four Treatises, p. 169.
II. p. 19.

(*e*) Unit. Tracts, vol.

the *Saracens* to make them relinquish their Idolatry, better than any Arguments the *Christians* could invent (*f*): and there can be no wonder at this; when we consider, that the *Christians* were guilty of Idolatry themselves. “I will not here question, says Mr. *Mede*, whether the *Christian* or *Mahometan* be the greater Idolater; though the doubt might soon be resolved: seeing it is well known, that the *Mahometans* worship no Images(*g*).” The *Saracens*, says the same learned Author, who spoiled and subdued so great a part of *Christ’s* Church; were never heard of, till six hundred years after *Christ*: even at the time when *Christians* began generally to fall to Idolatry, and to worship Images, Saints, and Angels. Then God first gave Us over to serve other Nations; when We began to serve other Gods, besides the Lord our God. And the *Turkish* Fury could never be stayed from casting more and more this bondage upon our necks; till the Reformed Churches began to put away their Idols(*h*).”

II. Another reason why *Christianity* hath been lost in several Parts of the World, where it was once received; and not received in others, where it was preached; is the Wickedness of the *Christians*, and their continual Animosities and

(*f*) *Morgan’s Hist of Barbary*, p. 146, 159, 166.

(*g*) *Jos. Mede’s Works*, p. 795.

(*h*) *Ibid.* 194.

Persecutions(*i*). *Eusebius*, speaking of the times of *Dioclesian*, says; “When the Pastors of our Church, setting aside the Laws and Rules of their Religion, minded only quarrelling with each other; which produced nothing but reproaches, threats, emulations, hatred, and separations; while each most eagerly contended for Rule and Pre-eminence; then, according to the saying of *Jeremiah*, “the Lord in his displeasure darkened the daughter of *Zion*: and cast down from Heaven the Glory of *Israel*—by the Subversion of the Churches(*k*).” And so in *Africa* we are told by good Authority, that the *Christians* owed their ruin to themselves; and what made the *African Moors* so passive, and ready to fall-in with the *Mahometans*, was “the hope of ridding themselves of their greatest eyesore; the imperious, impiously vicious, insatiably avaricious, and consequently insufferably tyrannical *Christians*(*l*).” And even with regard to Persecution for Conscience-sake, the same scene of Abomination, which was begun in *Asia*, was acted over in *Africa*; with the same Success. The Authority of persecuting to Blood, was procured from the Emperor *Honorius*; by four Bishops sent from *Carthage* to that purpose. A. C. 410. and his Edicts comprehended all Dissenters, who departed ever so little, *vel levi ar-*

(*i*) Letter I. p. 12, &c. (k) Eccles. Hist. B. viii. ch. 1. (l) *Morgan*, as above.

gumento, from the established Faith(*m*). Thus the *Christians* murdered one another, for difference of Opinion; and were severely punished for all their abominations, by the just Judgement of God.

Eusebius considers the Persecution under *Dio-clesian*, in that light(*n*). It is unfit, says he, for us to record their mutual deviations and folly before the Persecution. Wherefore we will relate no more concerning them, than whereby we may justify the divine vengeance. *Socrates*, speaking of the first Persecution of the *Novatians* at *Rome* by Pope *Innocent*, observes; that at the same instant the *Goths* invaded *Italy*, and became the Lords of all(*o*). And, about seventeen years after the Bishops of *Carthage* had procured the persecuting Edict from *Honorius*, the country was invaded by the *Vandals* under *Genferic*; where the *Christians* had more than 700 Bishopricks; and about five millions of Men were destroyed: so that *Procopius* observes, it was next to a Miracle to see a Man. And afterwards, when the *Saracens* became the masters of *Africa*, they asserted the same power over the Consciences of the *Christians*, which the *Christians* with no more right or justice had exercised before, over one another; and those

(*m*) Sir *Isaac Newton* on the Prophecies, p. 298.

(*n*) *Euseb.* Eccles. Hist. Book viii. chap. 2.

(*o*) *Taylor's Lib.* of Proph. Ded. 25.

who

who would not immediately become *Mahometans*, were either killed or banished. And indeed, with what appearance of Reason could it be expected; that the just Judgements of God should fall upon the *Heathens*, for persecuting the *Christians*; and yet that the *Christians* should escape them, when they murdered one another? When any thing happened unfortunately at *Rome*, in the days of *Nero*, &c. the immediate cry was, to burn the *Christians*: and did not the *Christians* act upon the very same Principle, when *Nestorius* declared to the Emperor *Theodosius*; “clear me the Earth of Hereticks; and “I will in return give you the Kingdom of “Heaven: assist Me to destroy the Hereticks; “and I will assist You to destroy the *Persians*?” And what was the Consequence of this diabolical Practise afterwards in the days of *Justinian*; but the desolation of whole Provinces? Thus the Sceptre of *Christ* was proved to be a Sceptre of Righteousness under the *Christian* dispensation; as it had been in former ages, when he destroyed *our* Church and Nation(*p*). For though in his Love and his Pity he redeemed them; yet, when they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, he turned to be their Enemy; and fought against them(*q*). These were the natural Effects of that Apostasy from the Word of God to

(*p*) See Letter II. p. 303.

(*q*) *Is.* lxiii. 9. 10.

the Commandments of Men; which still continues, more or less, in all the *Christian Churches*: and God Almighty hath justly plagued them with their own inventions, as he did our Fathers. And, as these things have arisen entirely from the *Christians* themselves; in opposition to the Precepts, and the very Nature of the Gospel; it could never be expected, that the Blessing of God should attend either the Men or the Doctrines which they taught; any farther than it has done. Their *Ruin* was the Consequence of their *Apostasy*. And, if what the Bishop of *Gloucester* has advanced, be admitted as a Truth by the Governors of the *Christian Churches*; that the true End, for which Religion is established, is not to provide for *Truth*, but for *civil Utility* (r); it is not likely, that *Christianity* will make any farther progress soon; but rather be more corrupted, than it now is: and especially, if once the Governors of the Church shall take upon them to *define Heresy more strictly*; and the Officers of the Church shall have power to *censure Hereticks, though not extirpate*; which Sir *William Blackstone* seems to imagine necessary for the Support of a national Religion(s). For though these Officers may not *begin* their Censures with Extirpation; yet, as surely as ever the Practice of defining Heresy, and censuring

(r) *Alliance*, p. 254.

(s) See his IVth Vol.

Heretics,

Heretics, is revived; so surely the Politicians will drive the nail that will go; and use the *civil* Arm, in support of their *own Decrees*; let them be ever so *absurd*, or ever so *subversive* of the true *Christian* Doctrines; and nothing better can be expected to be the Consequence of defining Heresies by *civil* Utility, without regard to *Christianity* and *Truth*; than the establishment of the Doctrines of Men, in opposition to the Word of God. And yet, notwithstanding all this, when we consider that the present state of things, and a much worse than the present, hath been long ago foretold; and is expected both by Protestants and Papists (*t*);

(*t*) *Suarez* Def. Fid. Cath. l. v. c. 21. Non est incredibile, *Romam* prope *Antichristi* tempora ita afflictam, ut quasi in Angulo, vel in Cavernis Terræ delitescat. See *Rhem.* Annot. on *Theff.* ii. 2. lect. 6. And some learned *Protestants* have concluded from the Prophecies; “that the face of Protestantism will become once more covered with as foul a Corruption, as was ever that of Popery; before the happy Liberty and Light of the Gospel shall take place.” “God Almighty having ever used to usher in any great Exaltation of his Saints with some desperate Extremity and Calamity immediately foregoing it.” And it seems by the Prophecies, that the witnesses or preachers of the true Faith, shall be to all appearance entirely overcome and put to silence; before the Kingdoms of this World become the Kingdoms of Christ. See *Rev.* xi. 7, &c. *Cudworth*, p. 601, 980. *Sir Isaac Newton* on the Prophecies, 250.

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the small extent of genuine *Christianity* at present, and the small Progress it has made in the World, under the arbitrary decrees of Synods and Councils; or is likely to make under such Establishments, as do not provide for the Truth, but merely for *civil* Utility; can by no means be looked-upon by an Adversary, who is not a mere Bigot to *Deism*, as any real and substantial Objection to *Christianity* itself.

I have now completed what I designed to lay before you, as my Apology for embracing *Christianity*; by shewing it to be a Revelation consistent with the Nature of God to give, and with that of Man to receive; and agreeable to the Revelation given to our Fathers. And from the whole there seems to arise one plain, rational, consistent, and benevolent System of God's moral Government over the affairs of Men, carried-on from the beginning to the end, by the ministration of the Angel of the Covenant; who led our Fathers through the Wilderness—But it still remains to be examined; whether this System of Religion be the *true* one. For the Deists will urge; that *natural* Religion is a rational, consistent, and benevolent System, as well as *Christianity*; and not subject to so many Difficulties: in which assertion they must be allowed to speak the Truth. For *Christianity* must, in the very Nature of it, be subject to the greater number of Difficulties; because it extends our
view

view to many more particulars in the divine Government, which it is our Interest to be acquainted with; and many intricacies in Providence, which it only explains in part: in which case it is natural for the solution of one Difficulty to introduce another, or sometimes several others. We must not therefore be affrighted from our Faith, merely upon account of the Difficulties we find in it; unless they be of such a nature, as to appear Falsities or Absurdities: for such as arise merely from our Ignorance must be found in all Systems; wherever our Knowledge of things is bounded and we can see no farther.

If any one therefore would convert me to *Atheism*; he must not attempt to do it merely by pointing out the Difficulties, in considering the nature of Eternity, and Space, and Creation, and the origin of Evil, &c. but he must give me a Solution of all the appearances I observe in Nature, less liable to objection than *Theism*: he must shew me, that the material, vegetable, and animal Creation, and the Intelligence of Man, and the Government of the whole, are to be accounted for more fully, and philosophically upon the *hypothesis* of no Cause at all, but Chance or Nature, which are *nonentities*; than from the Superintendence of an intelligent and all-powerful Creator. But this he is not able to do; and therefore I discard *Atheism*.

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In like manner, if any one would convert me to *Deism*; he must not only point-out the Difficulties which attend my present notion; but he must account-for the Existence of *Judaism* and *Christianity*, and the Accomplishment of the Prophecies, and many other things which will come into the question; upon such principles, as are less liable to objection, than what I now maintain: and shew them to be more fully accounted-for, *without* the supposition of a Revelation, than *with* it. But he is not able to do this: and therefore I discard *Deism*.

But it may be worth while to be more particular; and I must therefore observe, that we have Books; which contain the Civil and Religious Laws of a great Nation, by which they were governed from the earliest ages; and which have been looked-upon to be authentic, to the present times; dispersed through all the learned Nations in the World, translated into different Languages, made the particular Study of the Learned for many Centuries, testified-of by the Writers of every age, from the days of the Apostles; whilst they continued to be a great and powerful Nation; and we have Prophecies in these books, from before the days of *Moses*; others, from the time of the *Jewish* Kings; which we find confirmed by the most ancient Heathen Writers of different Nations, to have been punctually fulfilled long time after they
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were given : and other Prophecies of *Christ* and his Apostles : some of all which, both *Jewish* and *Christian*, reach to the present Times ; and we see and know them to be accomplished, and the present state of the World manifestly tending to the accomplishment of the rest. All these things must be accounted-for by the *Deist* ; as well as the *Christian*. And the question will be ; when their different Theories come to be impartially examined, whether is the more probable.

If the *Deist* denies the authenticity of the books ; he must give his reasons, *why*, and upon what *grounds* ; and account-for the several quotations from them, and references to them, in other books in all ages, from the Apostles to the present times. Or rather he must deny the Authenticity of them all ; for there is no book so well attested, as the Scriptures : but this would certainly be a more improbable Tenet ; than any thing that is advanced, either by the *Jews* or *Christians*, in favour of a Revelation. On the other side, if he allows the books to be of the Antiquity they pretend ; and yet holds the Prophecies in them to be the Inventions of Men ; he must then maintain, that the Impostors in the days of *Moses*, and afterwards in the days of *Christ*, were able to foretell, merely by human Conjecture, the future affairs of the *Jews* and *Christians* ; the one for above 3000, the

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other

other for more than 1700 years: which is absolutely incredible.

A Man, that would undertake to account-for these things upon such principles; would find his Theory liable to much greater Objections, than any that attend the belief of a Revelarion. And yet nothing is more common, than to meet with men; who being somehow or other disgusted with *Christianity*, think it sufficient to object against it at *random*; without considering, that the objections they make, oblige them frequently to submit to much greater difficulties than they object to; and, in order to avoid *Christianity*, to lay themselves open sometimes even to *Atheism* itself. The Reason of this Indignation against Religion in general, is thus very honestly given by Mr. *Wollaston*—Among other Prejudices, there is one of a particular nature; which we must observe to have been one of the greatest Causes of modern Irreligion. Whilst some Opinions and Rites are carried to such an immoderate Height, as exposes the Absurdity of them to the view of almost every body, but them who receive them; not only Gentlemen of the *belles Lettres*, but even men of common Sense many times see through them: and then out of indignation and excessive Renitence, not separating what is *true* from that which is *false*, they come to deny *both*; and fall into the contrary extreme, a Contempt of all Religion in general(*u*).

(*u*) *Wollaston's Rel. of Nat. Del.* §. 3. Art. 16. Obs. 8.

Another

Another Writer, in a book dedicated to the late Lord *Lyttleton*, speaks to the same purpose. "Though the articles of religious Belief, that fall within the comprehension of mankind, and seem essential to their Happiness, are few and simple; yet ingenious men have contrived to erect them into a most tremendous System of metaphysical Subtlety. The bad consequences of such Systems have been various—Most men are bred-up in a belief of the peculiar and distinguishing opinions of some one religious sect or other. They are taught; that all these are founded equally on divine Authority, or the clearest deductions of Reason. By which means all their Religion hangs so much together; that one part of it cannot be shaken, without endangering the whole. But, whenever any Freedom of Enquiry is allowed, the Folly of some of these opinions, and the uncertain Foundation of others, cannot be concealed; and, when this comes to be the case, a general Distrust of the whole commonly succeeds; with that Luke-warmness in Religion, which is its necessary Consequence(x). Bp. *Burnet* makes the same Observation in his Letters.

These are the Reasons, why *Deism* so universally prevails among men of Sense in *France*. It is, because their Divines have explained the

(x) Comparative view of Men and Animals: 213, 214.

doctrines of *Christianity* in such a manner ; as to contradict their notions of natural Religion, which they can demonstrate ; and they reject the whole, rather than admit as a divine Revelation what they know to be false, and perhaps blasphemous.

Another Reason, which leads to the same end, is ; because they find themselves so oppressed, and enslaved, and tyrannized over, by their Ecclesiastics. Whereas, if *Christianity* was so explained, as to be consistent with the natural notions of Morality, and the attributes of God ; and the ecclesiastical powers so restrained, as they are in *England* ; all this excessive Renitence would subside ; and the Men of Literature would be as ready to attend the proofs of the Divinity of the new Testament, as of the Authenticity of *Cæsar's* Commentaries, or *Cicero's* Orations.

In the mean time, this excessive renitence, and contempt of all Religion upon this account, in men who profess to think freely, is most unbecoming the character of Philosophers and Scholars : whose proper business it is, in Religion, as well as in every part of Science, to separate Truth from Error ; and not to give up both together, because there is some Difficulty in the Operation. Besides, the Difficulty they fear, is chiefly imaginary ; for, if they would but give themselves the trouble to examine

mine without prejudice into the new Testament itself, they would find; that, with regard to most of the Doctrines which they start at, it is as hard a task to prove them to be the Doctrines of the new Testament; as it would be to defend them, if they were found there.—But it is easier to cut the *Gordian* Knot, than to untie it; and totally to give over all Examination, than to enquire into the Merits of the cause. However, a Man that does this, is neither to be called a Deist, nor a Free-thinker; but merely an idle and thoughtless man: of which kind there are many thousands in this Country, who mistake themselves for *Deists*.

It may perhaps be asked; what Encouragement have men to part with their prejudices, and lay themselves open to a free and impartial Enquiry into these matters; when they find, that the more they believe, the more they are enslaved: To which it may be justly answered; that their Fears are contrary to Fact: for we find in *England*, and all those countries where any free enquiry has been made into Religion; that the people are less enslaved, and yet the Religion more firmly believed by men of Sense and Learning. And as a farther encouragement to a fair examination of these Subjects, it is well known; that *Christianity* has, by a free enquiry, been already cleared of many monstrous Errors; with which it was loaded in the days of Ignorance
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and Superstition : and is every day found to be more consistent with the Understanding, as well as the natural Liberties of Mankind.

The case was once the same with *Philosophy* ; as it is now with *Religion*. The Earth's motion, the plurality of Worlds, and many other notions were looked-upon to be *Heretical* ; as Sir *Isaac Newton*'s Principles are now supposed to be in Popish Countries. But, “ when a fair examination was encouraged, Problems, that appeared of insuperable Difficulty in one age, were resolved in another ; and in a third, in a manner despised as too simple and easy (y) ;” and the same has been the case already in some points of Theology. The chief mistakes in *Philosophy* arose from their Impatience in forming Theories, without consulting *Nature* ; and the chief mistakes in *Christianity*, from forming Theories, without consulting *Scripture*. From whence it followed ; that the Doctrines to be maintained being often false, could only be defended by *Postulata* equally indefensible ; and thus Errors increased, and succeeding Ages mistaking them for Truth, because they were established, no one had the Courage to examine into them, whether they were agreeable to the *Scripture* or not ; or, if they did, it was dangerous to mention their discoveries.

(y) *Maclaurin*.

And

And should not men of Learning and Candour allow for these oversights in *Christianity*, as well as in *Philosophy*; and endeavour to get clear of their Errors, by the same Study and Application; and by recurring to the original *Scripture*, as the Philosophers recurred to *Nature*? They have certainly the same encouraging prospect of Success; and, as the affair of Religion is of much the greatest importance, they are inexcusable if they neglect it; especially, as they must thereby deprive themselves, merely through carelessness and prejudice, of the most agreeable and important part of Literature. For nothing seems to be an Entertainment more adapted to the nature of Man, than an enlarged contemplation of the divine Wisdom in the Government of the World; and a discovery of the secret and amazing Steps of Providence from the beginning to the End of Time. From hence, we may see the foundation for that ingenious saying, as Mr. de *St. Evremond* calls it, of General *Wurt's*; that when Men have taken out of *Christianity* what they have once foisted into it, there will be but one Religion, as plain in it's doctrine, as pure in it's Morals(z).

But some Gentlemen, especially those who have conversed much with the *Romanists*, will tell us; (and some few perhaps believe it;) that

(z) *St. Evrem.* Vol. II. p. 68.

it is to no purpose, to use our Reason upon Religious subjects: because the Reason of man is so imperfect, and confined within such narrow bounds. But why then are they afraid, that it should pass those bounds? And, if this cannot be done; why should they not examine, where those bounds are fixed; and in the mean time use their Understanding, as far as it will go; and try all things—first, whether they are revealed or not; and then, in what sense they are to be understood. And, if the question be above their Capacities, and they are not able to find out the true sense of it; they may be sure that the true sense is not revealed to *them*, nor of any importance to *their* Salvation, nor an Article of *their* Faith. For a Revelation, that leaves us as ignorant as it found us, is to *us* no Revelation at all.

But we are told, that some articles of Faith are to be viewed at a distance; and looked-upon with silent Veneration, and religious Awe; and an examination into them by Reason is dangerous, because they are *above* our Reason.—Do *Christ* and his Apostles tell us this? No; but the *Romanists* do: for Transubstantiation can be believed by no other means; and they would persuade the Protestants, if they could, that they have *credenda* in the Protestant Church; which are as contrary to the Sense and Reason of Mankind, as Transubstantiation. And some,
who

who mistake themselves for *Deists*, take it upon their Words; and, in consequence of it, deny all Revelation in the Grofs.

But let us examine, where this Danger lies; and let us choofe a question, in which the *Deist* is as much concerned as the *Christian*; viz. how the material World could be brought into being, when as yet it was not: or in what manner Creation is performed. This question must be allowed by all men to be *above* our Reason; and yet we apply to our Reason for a Solution of it: but our Reason informs us, that we might as well have applied to a brick Wall; that, if we wanted her assistance, we should have given her some *data* to argue from; but that here she can find none; and therefore is not able to move a step forward. And this will be the case, in all other questions which are above our Reason; whether they relate to Nature or Revelation. And, consequently, the Danger of our reasoning, in such cases, is merely imaginary; except we reason like Fools, and draw conclusions which will not follow from the Premises: and this we may do, in matters that are *level* to the understanding; as well as in those that are *above* it.

On the other hand, it seems to be absolutely necessary for us to examine, with regard to every subject of Importance; whether it be *above* our Reason or not: for otherwise, we may lose the Knowledge of many Important Truths; merely

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by our Neglect. We may instance in the question of Transubstantiation; this is looked-upon by the *Romanists* as the greatest of all Mysteries; and yet we find, upon examination, that it is contrary to Sense and Reason; and consequently *false*. For the very proof that it is contrary to Sense and Reason, which is called *Reductio ad absurdum*, proves the falsity of a proposition as effectually in Religious matters, as in the Mathematics: and the credibility of *Christianity* itself depends upon this kind of argument. For, if we could believe what is contrary to Sense and Reason; it would be impossible to prove the Truth of it.

However, we are told, in answer to this; that the *Protestants* have their mysteries, as well as the *Papists*. 'Tis true: and so have the *Deists*; in the *true Scripture* sense of the Word *Mystery*. But why is not a *Mystery* to be examined into; as well as any other Proposition? Or how can a *Mystery* be true, that is contrary to Sense and Reason; any more than any other Proposition? It is amazingly weak and thoughtless in *Protestants*, to talk of the Mysteries of *Christianity* in this manner; as if they were *credenda* contrary to Sense and Reason, or not to be reconciled to them. *Christianity* has no such Mysteries: when the *Deists* speak of *Christianity* in this manner, they mean to inculcate, that our *Faith* is *Nonsense*: and when the *Papists* use
this

this argument to convert the *Protestants*, it is merely to bring them over to the *belief* of Nonsense.

It is high time for the Protestants to understand this Word *Mystery*, which has been of such infinite Service to *Rome*, in the same sense in which it is explained and used in Scripture. A *Mystery*, in the *Popish* Sense of the Word, is a Proposition inexplicable, contrary to Sense and Reason, and as incomprehensible after Revelation as it was before: and in this sense it is, in which the *English*, when they return from travelling through *Popish* Countries, generally understand it; and apply it, when they come home, to the Religion of *Protestants*: and this is another reason of their Disgust against *Christianity* in general. But this sense of the Word *Mystery* is so far from the true *one*; that it will not agree with any one Text in the New Testament.

For your Satisfaction upon this Subject, which is of great Importance, I shall examine every Text we find there; in which the word *Mystery* is used.

Christ tells his Disciples; to You it is given to know the *Mystery* of the Kingdom of God: and accordingly he explains to them the parable of the Sower. (*Mar.* iv. 11. *Lu.* viii. 10. *Mat.* xiii. 11.)—*St. Paul* says to the *Romans*; I would not, Brethren, that ye should be ignorant of

this *Mystery*; viz. that Blindness had happened to *Israel* in part, till the fulness of the *Gentiles* be come-in. (*Ro.* xi. 25.)—And to the *Corinthians* he says; I shew you a *Mystery*, we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed. (*I Cor.* xv. 51.)—And we are told, (*Eph.* i. 9, 10.) that God hath made known to us the *Mystery* of his Will; viz. that he will gather together in one, all things in *Christ*; as it is explained in the next verse.—And so the *Mystery* is explained, (*Eph.* iii. 3.) that the *Gentiles* should be joint Heirs with the *Jews*; and St. Paul explains the *Mystery* which he speaks of; (*Eph.* v. 19.)—We see from hence; that every particular of the *Christian Doctrine*, which was not known before, is called a *Mystery*: and the whole Revelation, when taken together, is called by the same name. The Gospel is therefore said to be the Wisdom of God in a *Mystery*; (*I Cor.* ii. 7.) and the partaking of it, the fellowship of the *Mystery*; (*Eph.* iii. 9.) and it was the knowledge of this *Mystery*, which was made known to St. Paul; (*Eph.* iii. 3.) which the *Ephesians* were to understand, (verse 4.) and which he was to make known: (*Eph.* vi. 19.)—Hence we see; that the *Mystery* of the Gospel was the Doctrine of the Gospel: a Doctrine, that was preached; and a *Mystery*, that was made manifest, and explained. (*Col.* i. 26, 27. iv. 3.)—And this was the *Mystery* of *Christ*, (*Eph.* i. 4.) and the *Mystery* of Faith,

Faith, (I *Tim.* iii. 9.) and the *Mystery* of Godliness, (I *Tim.* i. 16.) and the *Mysteries*, of which the Apostles were Stewards; (I *Cor.* iv. 1.)—And the same word is used on things not yet explained, but to be explained *immediately*: as the *Mystery* of the Seven Stars, (*Rev.* i. 20.) or, of what is to be explained *hereafter*; as the *Mystery* of Iniquity, which then began to work. (I *Thess.* ii. 7.)—And the *Mystery* of God which is to be finished, is the method of his Government. (*Rev.* x. 7.)—And St. Paul speaks of *understanding* all *Mysteries*, (I *Cor.* xiii. 2.) and declares his desire for the *Colossians*, &c. that they may have full assurance of *Understanding*, to the acknowledgement of the *Mysteries* of God: (*Col.* ii. 2.) so that the *Mysteries* he preached were to be acknowledged by the *Understanding*;—and he that spake in an unknown Tongue is said to speak *Mysteries*; merely for want of an Interpreter (I *Cor.* xiv. 2.)

From all which it appears; that the word *Mystery* in the new Testament, means nothing more than a *Secret*; or a thing not understood. And in the same manner, as the word *Secret* is still made use of, after it is divulged; (as when we say, the *Secret* is well known;) so the word *Mystery* is used to signify the Doctrines of the Gospel, even after they had been publicly taught and explained: and, consequently, if we must not search into *Mysteries*, we must not
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endeavour to understand the Gospel ; and if so to what purpose was the Revelation made ? The only place in the new Testament, where it can be understood to mean an unintelligible Doctrine, is in the *Revelation* (xvii. 15.) where we are told, that upon the forehead of the Woman who sat upon the scarlet-coloured Beast full of names of Blasphemy, was written *Mystery, Babylon, the mother of Harlots, and abominations of the Earth ; a proper Ornament enough for Her, but very inconsistent with the Faith of a Protestant Church.* Upon the whole, there is not a single Text in the new Testament ; which even intimates to us, that a *Mystery* is an improper subject for Examination ; or above our Comprehension.

The Religion of *Protestants*, on the contrary, is founded upon plain and intelligible Principles : and adapted to the Understanding of all men, as far as the *Belief* of it is necessary to their Salvation. And to imagine it a requisite in any one to believe the obscure parts of it more *explicitly*, than they are *explicitly* revealed and *clearly* explained in Scripture ; is as absurd, as it is to suppose that no man can have a saving Faith in God, and believe that he is, and that he created the World, and governs it ; without an explicit notion of necessary Existence and Creation, and the origin of Evil, and laws of the Planetary System.

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It is the pretending to know more of *Christianity*, than God has revealed; and to explain *authoritatively*, what the Scripture has not given us sufficient *data* to understand with certainty and precision; that has caused all the Errors and Animosities in the *Christian Church*: whereas, if men would be content to be ignorant; where they really are so, and God intended that they should be so; there would be more *Christianity* in the World, as Dr. *Whicbrote* has observed; and less Controversy(*a*).

As the Doctrines of *Christianity* are all of them intelligible to every individual; as far as is necessary to be believed by every individual, in order to his Salvation: so are the Arguments, by which the Credibility of the Revelation is to be proved, plain and intelligible to a very low capacity. And these I shall proceed to lay before you, as clearly as I can, in the following Propositions.

1. When a Being, infinitely happy in himself, creates a number of moral Agents, from whom he can receive no Benefit; there can be no other Reason given, for such a Creation, but his *Benevolence*: He does not create them for his *own* Happiness; but *theirs*. And as moral Perfection is necessary, not only for the Happiness of Society, but for that of every individual moral Agent; it follows, that moral

(*a*) See the Motto on Letter VI.

Perfection must be one end for which they were created; and for the attaining of which he endued them with Understanding to judge of moral Obligation.

2. As the moral Perfection of men, and their mutual Happiness, depends so greatly upon right notions of the moral Perfections of God, and his Government over them by the dispensation of Rewards and Punishments, according to their Works; it is not *improbable*, that, if at any time the knowledge of his Perfections should be in danger of being utterly and universally depraved and lost in the World, he would by some means or other prevent it; and inform them, that they were *his* Creatures, and accountable to him for their Actions; and that he would be a Rewarder of such, as should diligently seek him.

3. If it should please God to *reveal* such things to any part of Mankind; it is *probable*, that he would do it in such a manner; as would be proper to convince both his Messenger, and those to whom he should send him, that the Revelation came from *him*.

4. To convince the Messenger, that the Revelation came from him; and was not a mere Fancy, or Imagination, or idle Dream; it is *probable*, that he would assure him by *some external appearance or action superior to the power of Man*, which he could not be mistaken in; that
he

he received Assistance from, and had Communication with, that Being superior to Man, in whose name he was to speak: and such exertion of Power would be called *miraculous*. The Reason why I say it is *probable* that God would take such a method to convince him, is; because I can conceive no way, by which God can prove himself superior to Man; but by the performance of some Action, or (which I include in the word *Action*) the manifesting some Knowledge, *beyond the power of Man*(*b*). And

5. To convince Mankind of the Divinity of the Message he was to reveal to them; it is *probable*, that God would furnish the Messenger with such Credentials; as should *convince those*, to whom he preached, of his *divine* Mission: and would not expect, that his Messenger's word should be believed, without such Attestation. And consequently it is *probable*, that he would *supply him* with *power* to prove his Assistance from, and Communication with, that Superior Being, in whose name he spake. And

(*b*) Phoenix, Vol. II. p. 250.

George Duke of Buckingham observes, that Demonstration in matters of Faith is absolutely unnecessary; because, if I can convince a man, that the notions I maintain are more likely to be true, than false; it is not in his power not to believe them: and belief is all that is required of us in the speculative part of Religion. See the Note, Letter IV. p. 482.

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this power must also be above the power of Man;
i. e. miraculous.

6. And, if God should also design this Revelation for the use of succeeding generations; it is *probable*, that he would supply his Messenger with such farther Evidence of his divine Mission; as should be sufficient to convince *succeeding Generations*: and this might be done, by empowering him to foretell *future* Events; upon the accomplishment of which, *future* Ages would be convinced of the divine Mission of his Messenger; as well as the Generation he preached to. It is not therefore *improbable*, that he might endow his Minister with the Spirit of *Prophecy*.

From hence we may collect thus much; that there is nothing *improbable* in the Supposition, that God might *reveal* his Will to Mankind; and, in that case, would confirm and establish his Revelation by *Miracles* and *Prophecies*. Nay farther, if it cannot be shewn to be *improbable*, that God should reveal his Will to Mankind; the *Miracles* and *Prophecies* will be so far from *improbable*; that, according to our notions of *Evidence* and *Proof*, they will be absolutely *necessary* to that end. And, consequently, the whole Improbability of Miracles and Prophecy cannot possibly be greater; than the Improbability that *God should reveal his Will to Man*: for, if *that* be probable, Miracles will be not
only

only probable, but necessary.—So that the question regarding the Probability of Miracles and Prophecy *a priori* between the *Deist* and the *Christian*, will be reduced to this one point; Whether it is *probable* or *improbable*, that God should reveal his Will to Man; in order to prevent the knowledge of his moral Perfections and Government, and Superintendency over the affairs of Men, from being entirely obliterated and forgotten(c).

Having shewn it to be *probable*, that God might reveal his Will to Mankind, and confirm and establish his Revelations by Miracles and

(c) Mr. *Hume* has laid it down for a truth, “that no testimony is sufficient to establish [the belief of] a miracle, unless the falsehood [viz. of the evidence] be more miraculous than the fact it endeavours to establish.”—Upon which I observe, that to speak of the truth or falsity of a man’s Evidence, as being *miraculous* only misleads and deceives. A man’s Evidence may be credible, or incredible; probable, or improbable: but there can be nothing miraculous in his giving a true or a false evidence; it is *in his own power* to do which he pleases. I shall therefore venture to express Mr. *Hume*’s assertion in other words, viz. No testimony is sufficient to establish the belief of a miracle, unless the testimony to the miracle be more credible than the miracle attested-to, is improbable and incredible. And here I shall observe two things before I examine this assertion, 1st. that a miracle is an act performed by some Being superior to man, and capable of performing it. And 2d. that it has been here proved that the interposition of such a Being is probable.

Prophecies; I shall now proceed to prove the *Fact*: and, out of many Prophecies which might be chosen to argue from, I shall select *two* of the most extraordinary ones; which we know to be accomplished, and which are impossible to have been foreknown by human reason and conjecture; and highly *improbable* in themselves; the former of which is foretold by *Moses* and the Prophets, from above 3000 years ago; and the latter by the Apostles of *Jesus Christ*, from above 1700. Upon which I argue as follows;

I. If *Moses* and the Apostles could, and actually did, declare so long ago, what should come to pass in the future ages of the World; and this so plainly and expressly, as to be level to a common Understanding (*d*); and if we at this distance of time see, and know these Prophecies (impossible to be collected by human conjecture, and improbable in themselves;) to be actually compleated: What must we conclude; but that the Prophets, who foretold these things, had their Knowledge of them from the Supreme Being, who governs all things as he pleases; or from one, who was instructed by *him* in what manner he designed that things should be, at those several distances of time(*c*).

(*d*) See Dr. *Sam. Clarke's* Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Rel. Edit. vii. p. 425, where he specifies the Prophecies relative to *Babylon, Egypt, Tyre*, and many others.

(*e*) For this Argument see Dr. *Sykes*, on Miracles: the Author sometimes uses his very words.

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For my own part; when I read over the Writings of *Moses*, and the Prophets, relating to our *Dispersion* (*f*); that we shall be sifted and scattered into all Nations, and become a Proverb and a Reproach; and yet continue a *separate* People, capable of being gathered together again, even in the latter days (*g*); whereas all the nations of the world, who spoiled us, are utterly destroyed; as our Prophets long ago foretold (*h*): I cannot avoid concluding; that a Fact, so improbable in itself, and so contrary to what hath ever happened to any other nation in the World, could be foreknown by no one; who had not an intercourse by Inspiration with the God of the Universe: and the same Conclusion follows from the Prophecies of the old and new Testament, which gives us the particular Circumstances and Doctrines of the grand *Apostasy*, and of the rise and grandeur, and tyranny of the *Roman* Church; all which we know to have been punctually accomplished.

The prophet *Daniel* declares to *Nebuchadnezzar*, under the similitude of an Image (*i*); that after Him should arise a Kingdom inferior to *his*, and a third, and a fourth; and this *fourth* Kingdom should be divided into several;

(*f*) See Dr. *Sam. Clarke's* Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Rel. Edit. vii. p. 431.

(*g*) *Deut.* xxx. 3. (*h*) *Jer.* xxx. 11. *Amos*, ix. 8.
(*i*) *Dan.* ii.

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some of which should be strong, and others weak; and that, during this *fourth*, a Kingdom should be erected by the God of Heaven which should never be destroyed(k).

And in the seventh chapter he gives us the same Prophecy, under the similitude of *four* Beasts; which he explains to mean Kingdoms: (verse 17.) during the last of which, *ten* Horns or Kingdoms should arise out of it; *one* of which should arise different from the rest, which should subdue *three* of them.—

Now it is manifest, from the History of the World; that *four* great Monarchies did actually succeed one another, as it is here foretold: That, in the last of these, the Kingdom of *Christ* was erected; which will last *for ever*: That, this *fourth* Kingdom has been divided into *ten*, some weak and some strong; and that from among these the Pontiffs of *Rome* are risen, different from all the other Powers; and have subdued *three* of them: *viz.* the Exarchate of *Ravenna* in 755, the Kingdom of the *Lombards* in 773, and the Dukedom of *Rome* in 796; by which means the Bishop of *Rome* acquired *Peter's* Patrimony, and became a temporal Prince, and wears a *triple* Crown. But this Power, so fatal to *Christianity*, is more particularly described by the *Christians*. St. *John* speaks of him as *Anti-christ*; and at other times as a *Harlot* or *Apostate*.

(k) *Dan.* ii. 44.

tized Church(*l*), having her Residence at *Rome*, sitting on the *Roman* throne(*m*), and reigning over the Kings of the Earth, into which the *Roman* Empire was broken, who gave her their Kingdom and Power and Strength(*n*), and as branded in the forehead with the name *Mystery, Babylon*, the mother of Harlots, and abominations of the Earth(*o*). And the Apostle saw her (that is, the *Christian* Church) drunken with the blood of the Martyrs of *Jesus*; and when he saw her, he wondered with great admiration(*p*): viz. to see the *Christian* Church drunken with the blood of *Christians*.

Now when I look into History; and find this Character, strange as it is, fulfilled in the *Roman* Church; nay, see the completion of these Prophecies before my Eyes: I cannot have the least doubt, but that the Prophets, who foretold them, were instructed and inspired by God. For nothing that ever happen'd in the World can be more amazing, to us who look backward; or could have appeared more improbable to the Apostles, when they looked forward; than what is here foretold, and has actually happened, in consequence of the Apostasy from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men, (from which no *Christian* Church in the World is yet clear;) that the *Christian* Saints

(*l*) *Rev.* xvii. 5. (*m*) *ver.* 18. (*n*) *ver.* 13.
(*o*) *ver.* 5. (*p*) *ver.* 6.

and Martyrs should be persecuted by the Rulers of the *Christian* Church; and the most Religious and Learned among them, the great Patrons and Defenders of the Faith, the Sufferers and Martyrs for the Truth, should introduce into the *Christian* Church those very Errors, which the Apostles foretold in direct words to be the doctrines of the Apostasy; as the forbidding to marry, and abstaining from meats; and those Errors, which *Christ* came into the World to put an end to; such as Idolatry, and the Worship of the dead; and should not scruple to murder one another, as He had foretold, out of a notion of doing God good Service; and should raise-up a Power to sit in the Temple of God, as St. *Paul* had foretold, superior to the Emperor, and all that is called God; and destructive to the Authority of *Christ* himself: and that not only the vulgar and ignorant, but the noble and learned, through all the Kingdoms into which the *Roman* Empire is divided; and all their Kings and Emperors, for many generations; and almost every individual in their Kingdoms, should patiently submit to take his yoke upon them; and to bend the knee before him—If these things can hardly be conceived to be possible, even at this time of day, though known by undeniable History; and the power of the *Roman* Pontiffs still remains; How was it possible, that the Apostles
should

should ever think of framing such a Prophecy, without the divine Assistance(*q*).

These Prophecies therefore, I conclude to be certain proofs of a Power superior to Man, assisting those who are said to have performed the Miracles recorded in the old and new Testaments: such as can leave no doubt upon an unprejudiced mind, that there must have been an intercourse between God and Man by *Prophecy*; and no conjectural Objections can be of force

(*q*) It is agreed, by Protestants and Papists; that the Beast here spoken-of in the Apocalypse signifies *Rome*. But the *Romanists*, with *Bossuet* Bp. of *Meaux* at their head, say; that it signifies *Rome Pagan*: and so say some *Protestants*. But the contrary will appear very clear; from the following Considerations.

1. The Beast which *St. John* saw, was *about* to arise; and was not then 'risen: ch. xvii. 8. but *Pagan Rome* was then in its height.

2. *St. John* was seized with Astonishment, upon seeing Her (the great Whore) drunk with the blood of the Saints: and nothing could be more surprizing; if spoken of *Christian Rome*: but it could be no surprize in *Heathen Rome*; after he had seen the Persecutions of *Nero* and *Domitian*. ch. xvii. 6.

3. Power was given to the Beast to continue 1260 years; but it does not appear, that *Pagan Religion* continued in *Rome* 400 years after the Revelation.

4. The ten Horns are ten Kingdoms; which were to receive Power with the Beast *μὲν ὡραὶ* but nothing analogous to this ever happened in *Pagan Rome*. See Critical Notes on some passages in Scripture; ascribed to Mr. *Mann*.

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sufficient to be urged against such plain and positive Proof—And from hence I argue—

II. The Certainty of an intercourse between God and Man by *Prophecy*, takes-off all the improbability from the Miracles; said to be performed by the same persons, in proof of the Revelation they were about to establish and confirm; and all Suspicion of Falshood from the Historians who have related their actions. For he, who is certain from the completion of *Prophecy*; that the Prophets were assisted by a divine power to foretell things, which were impossible to be collected by human conjecture, and depended entirely upon the will of God; can have no reason to doubt, but that the same Being would also assist them in the *miraculous* works; which were equally necessary to promote the same end. The *Miracles* being designed to ascertain the divinity of the Revelation in the first age of its promulgation, to those that beheld them; and the Prophecies designed to ascertain the same Truth to such, as could not be present to see the proof by Miracles; but lived some time, perhaps some ages, after. It is therefore highly *probable*; even without the evidence of History, and prior to the consideration of it; that the same Persons, who were endowed with the power of *Prophecy*, were also endowed with the power of working *Miracles*: So that we have not only *no reason* to suspect the credit

credit of the Historian who should relate such fact, any more than we have to doubt of any other action he relates; but we have a reason *a priori*, from the nature of the thing, to *believe* such persons to be endowed with miraculous powers; and to *expect* to meet with accounts of such facts in the Historians who undertake to relate their actions.

If it be therefore demanded; why we *believe* the Miracles of the new Testament to have been performed by those, to whom they are ascribed? it is sufficient to answer—because we know, *by the completion of their Prophecies*, that they were assisted by a Being able to perform them; in whose work they were employed: which will render those facts *probable*; which would be *improbable*, if related of any *other* Being, not so assisted: and what would be in the general *incredible*, is in this particular case most reasonable to *expect*; and absurd to *disbelieve*. Add to this the Integrity of the Witnesses; their having no interest to serve, and their sacrificing their Lives to their Evidence; and a stronger proof will appear for these uncommon facts, than for any other occurrences that were ever attested from the beginning of the World(*r*). Hence I argue, that the Prophecies of *Moses*, concerning the State of the *Jews*; prove, by their completion,

(*r*) See Dr. *Sam. Clarke's* Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 438, &c.

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that *Moses*, had an intercourse with God; and thereby render probable the account of his Miracles, and the rest of his History, against the Objections of the *Deists*; and the completion of the Prophecies of *Christ* and his Apostles, proves their intercourse with God; and thereby gives credit to all the rest of the Evangelical History against both *Jews* and *Deists*. And the Completion of the *Jewish* Prophecies in the Person of *Christ*, connects the chain of Evidence for the Truth of Revelation from the times of *Moses* to the present age. And the present state of things, which were prophesied of so many ages ago, agreeing with the Prophecies which were then given, is a standing Miracle, which we know to be true; and this is the foundation upon which our Belief of all the rest is built. So that our Faith in both the Revelations, is rested upon Truth, and Fact, and Certainty.

III. The Credibility of the Miracles in question, renders probable the Truth of the Doctrines they are brought to prove.

Mr. *Chubb*, after trifling upon this question for ten pages, in which he seems more *desirous* of raising difficulties, than *capable* of it; concludes very justly, as follows.

“ Nevertheless, I think, it must be allowed;
 “ at least, it is readily allowed by me; that,
 “ though there be no such Connexion betwixt
 “ *Power* and *Truth*, as that one is a necessary at-
 “ *tendant*

“ *tendant* on the other: and though Miracles
 “ cannot alter the Nature of things; cannot
 “ make a false proposition true: yet I think,
 “ when it plainly appears, that miraculous
 “ Power is, or has been, exerted; the exertion
 “ of such power calls for our most serious at-
 “ tention and regard; and, if any Doctrine has
 “ been promulged by the Operator, that man-
 “ kind are *interested in*; which doctrine is in it-
 “ self probable, as being perfectly agreeable to
 “ our natural Notions of things; then, such
 “ *miraculous* Power at least greatly strengthens
 “ or heightens that probability; as it ministers
 “ just ground for presuming, that the spring of
 “ such superior *Power*, is the spring of superior
 “ *Knowledge* also; when both, to appearance at
 “ least, are kindly held-forth to answer the
 “ purposes of Benevolence. But, I think, we
 “ are not blindly to follow every thing, that
 “ may be recommended by *miraculous* Power:
 “ on the contrary, I think, it is our *Duty*, be-
 “ cause our *Interest* is embarked in the case, to
 “ try every Spirit, every Doctrine, every Pro-
 “ phet, every Teacher; to prove all things;
 “ and hold fast that, and that only; which,
 “ upon trial, appears to be worthy the common
 “ Parent of Mankind(s).”

I shall

(s) *Chubb's Enquiry concerning Redemption*, p. 112.
 Mr. *Chubb* says positively, p. 102. “ The Miracles
 “ wrought by the Apostles, were not connected with any
 “ Doctrine;

I shall contradict nothing that is here advanced. It seems to be very true, that a *Miracle*;

(or

“ Doctrine ; by this I mean, that they were not particularly declared to be so, by those who wrought them ;
 “ they not having declared what particular doctrines they
 “ intended to connect those miracles with, or whether
 “ they intended any such connexion at all.” In answer to this, please to consult *Acts* i. 8. ii. 32, 36. iii. 18. iv. 9, &c.* where you will see the miraculous Powers were given, that the Apostles might be witnesses to *Christ*, and the miracles are connected with the fundamental Doctrine they preached ; that *Jesus* was the *Christ*. And whereas he says, p. 103. the Ceremonial and Judicial Law do not appear to have any more connection with, or to be supported by, Miracles ; than was the dispensation of *Mahomet* : and the miracles in the Wilderness to be no more than instances of God’s extraordinary Presence with the Children of *Israel*, till he brought them into the Holy Land ; and at most, miracles only of kindness, or re-
 sentment

* But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in *Jerusalem*, and in *Judæa*, and in *Samaria*, unto the uttermost parts of the Earth, *Acts* i. 8.

Ch. II. 36. Therefore let all the house of *Israel* know assuredly, that God hath made that same *Jesus* whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and *Christ*.

Ch. III. 18. But these things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that *Christ* should suffer ; he hath so fulfilled.

Ch. IV. 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of *Israel*, that by the name of *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead ; even by him doth this man stand, here before you, whole, &c.

(or what we look-upon to be a *Miracle*, which is the same thing to us;) can prove nothing, except *mere Power*; till we know for certain, who is the *Author* of it: so that, when it is performed, as to all appearance, by a Man; it only proves him to be assisted by a Being superior to Man. But whether the Being who assists him be sent from God or not; can only be proved from the nature of the Revelation he brings, or the greatness of the Miracle, or whatever other marks it shall please God to set upon the cause which he espouses; by which a considering person will be able to distinguish it from the sentiment. In contradiction to this, see the account of the Passover, where the Miracle and Doctrine are connected, *Ex. xii. 27.* and how God connected the miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, *ch. vi. 1.* and how *Moses* connected the Miracles he had seen, with the Doctrines he had heard, *iv. 28, 31.* And the whole Ceremonial Law was delivered by the miraculous appearance of God (the Visible *Jehovah*) *ch. xix. 20.* and his answers by a Voice, *ver. 19.* and the Law given, *xx. xxi.* by the same Person; after which he was seen by the seventy Elders, and his Glory covered the Mount six days. See *xxiv. 10, &c.* What greater connection could there be: or what connection could be wanted; when the Laws were delivered from God himself; by the Visible *Jehovah*, the Angel of his Presence? But after all this, Mr. Chubb concludes, as I have here quoted†.

† See on this subject, Bp. Hoadly's Letter to Mr. Fleetwood, and Dr. Sykes's Essay.

cause of the Enemy, and be always sure to act with Safety⁽¹⁾.

I must own, it does not seem to Me at all necessary; that God Almighty should preserve us from mistakes, with regard to real or pretended Miracles, any more than on other occasions; without our own Care and Labour: and, if we are imposed upon, it is all one to us, whether we are deceived by a Man, an Angel, or a Devil. The question with regard to our safety in the moral Attributes of God, is not; whether He will suffer us to be deceived by one of these, *rather* than by another; but whether he will suffer us to be deceived *at all*. Wherever he means absolutely, that a Revelation shall be known to come from *him*; he will leave us under no uncertainty about it: but, when he means, that the belief of it shall depend upon our honest researches; he will afford us no *absolute* demonstration: and it will become us, in that case, to search out the truth by all the powers we are masters of. And if the Miracle, or what appears to us to be such, be in attestation of a Doctrine which we know to be false; or contradictory to the Perfections of God, (which the *Deists* object to *Christianity*;) or contrary to a prior Revelation of his Will, (which the *Jews* object to *Christianity*;) we ought to conclude, that the *Miracle* was per-

(1) See *Headly to Fleetwood*; Fol. Vol. I. p. 13.

formed by some *bad* Being; and we should reject the *Doctrine*, notwithstanding we might be obliged to allow of the *Miracle*: for it would be a Miracle of a *Lie*, wrought by the power of an evil Spirit to deceive.—And accordingly we find, in fact; that it is absurd to think of convincing either *Jew* or *Deist* of the Divinity of the new Testament, by urging the evidence of *Miracles*; till the *Doctrines* established by them appear to be agreeable to Reason. If the *Miracle* be not accompanied by any *Doctrine*; it can be of no signification to us, whether it proceeds from a good or a bad Being; our Conduct will not be at all affected by it. But if a *Doctrine* should be confirmed by *Miracle*, which should inform men in an extraordinary manner of the most useful and important Truths; agreeable to the Attributes of God, and his former Revelations; we should have reason to believe, that such a Revelation came from a *good* Being; and that we ought to attend to it most seriously; and especially, if this Revelation was accompanied with the completion of a *Prophecy*, which no Being in the Universe, either good or bad, could know; except by Information from the God of the Universe. For, whatever uncertainty we may be under with regard to *Miracles* alone, whether they are wrought by a good or a bad Being; this will not be the case, with regard

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to the *more sure word of Prophecy*. Here we are certain, that the Revelation must come from God; for no Being can with certainty foretell, unless he is able to bring about what he foretells; or is instructed by Him, who is able to do it: and this can be no other, than the God of the Universe(*u*). And accordingly we find; that *Christ* himself received from Him the Revelation, which he communicated to St. *John* by his Angel(*x*).

Now the *Doctrine* which appears to me to be thus confirmed, and which I have therefore endeavoured to prove and explain and recommend to the serious consideration of my Friends in the foregoing Letters, as worthy of all Acceptation; is briefly as follows.

1. That the Happiness of Mankind hereafter, will depend upon our *moral* Conduct in this World; or upon our acting according to the best of our Understanding, as to what is our Duty.

2. That the most effectual Motive to the practise of Rectitude, is the Belief that we are under the inspection of an all-perfect moral Governor; who will judge us according to our Works.

(*u*) See *Iſ.* xli. 23. xlii. 9. xliv. 7, 8. xlv. 9, 10. *Jer.* xiv. 14. xxvii. 9, 10. l. 35, 36.

(*x*) *Rev.* i. 1.

3. That,

3. That, to prevent the Knowledge of this Truth from being lost in the World; and a defection to Idolatry or Atheism, and an universal Depravity of manners, as the consequence; the supreme *Jehovah* did from the beginning ordain, that the *Jehovah Angel*, the same great and glorious Being, by whom He created the World, should superintend the moral Conduct of Men; and keep-up, in some part of the World, the History of God's Providence over it from the beginning; and the Prophecies of what should come to pass in future times.

4. That, to this purpose the *Jehovah Angel* made a Covenant with the *Jewish Nation*; which he took under his particular Care, because he knew that *Abraham* would command his Children after him, and they should keep the way of the Lord(y); and he separated it from other Nations, that they might not lose the knowledge of the true God, and fall into Idolatry: and he instructed them in the knowledge of God, and his Providence, and his Prophecies, and every thing necessary to prove to the rest of the world his Superintendence over the affairs of men, whenever they should pay a proper Attention to such subjects: and prepare them for such future Revelation, as he designed to give them in his own Time.

(y) *Gen.* xviii. 19.

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5. That, to carry-on this design, the *Jehovah Angel* sent his Prophets; to reclaim our Fathers, when they were running into Idolatry: who preached the Truth to them, at the risk of their Lives; in order to preserve them in the true Worship—as we are told, by way of Parable, in the twelfth chapter of St. *Mark*. “A certain man planted a Vineyard, and set a Hedge about it, and digged a place for the Wine-Fat, and built a Tower, and let it out to Husbandmen, and went into a far Country. And at the season he sent to the Husbandmen a Servant that he might receive of the Husbandmen the fruit of the Vineyard; and they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them an other Servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent an other; and him they killed: and many others; beating some, and killing some,” &c(z).

6. When it was no longer necessary that the *Jewish* Peculiarity should be kept-up, the supreme God sent into the World a greater Prophet than he had ever sent before; even that very Person, who had so long instructed the *Jewish* Nation by his Prophets: and *He* willingly undertook to descend from the Glory he enjoyed in the presence of God, to teach

(z) *Mar.* xii.

and instruct a wicked World; and reconcile them to God, by declaring and demonstrating his love and regard to Them. And the same Parable goes-on to tell us the Consequence of *his* Mission. “Having therefore one Son, his well-beloved, he sent *him* also unto them; saying, they will reverence my *Son*. But these Husbandmen said among themselves; This is the Heir, come let us kill him; and the Inheritance shall be ours: and they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the Vineyard.”

7. But though this great Prophet, this Son of God, was slain; yet he so far succeeded in his design of reforming Mankind, as to gather together into one Fold or Church many from among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who received him as their Lord and King, and declared themselves his Subjects, and submitted to be governed by the Laws of his Kingdom. And the Nation of the *Jews*, by whom he was slain, was given-up into the hands of the *Romans*; and their City and Temple destroyed. And on being no longer capable of preserving the Revelations of God, by reason of their disbelief of *Christianity*, the Disciples of *Christ* were commanded to turn and preach to the *Gentiles*; and those who believed succeeded into the same favour and peculiarity, which had been forfeited by the *Jews*; and have
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from that time to this been entrusted to preserve the sacred History and Prophecies, which are to *prepare* the World to receive him at his *second* coming, with great Power; as a *Prince*, and *Lord over the whole Earth*.

8. The Superiority of moral Perfection and Obedience to God in the *Jehovah Angel* above all other Beings, did not go unrewarded by the God of the Universe. But in reward of his Merits, he received power to raise the Dead, to forgive Sin, and to give everlasting Life to as many as he will, in that Kingdom which the invisible and self-existent *Jehovah* prepared for him before the World began; and by this means he became a Prince and a Saviour; King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; as will appear to be his proper Title, when he shall come at the end of the present *αιών* to reign over all; agreeably to the design of God, at the beginning of the World; that we should be saved by him, and he should be exalted above all Principalities and Powers. And it was to bring about these ends, that the *Christian* scheme was originally planned and designed by God: viz. to exercise and improve his Creatures in *Virtue*; that he might, as a righteous Judge, reward them with *Happiness*.

There is nothing in this Scheme, contrary to our Reason; nor can our Reason determine, *from the nature of it*, whether it be true or false; though

though it must be confessed, even by the Unbeliever; that it is impossible not to *wish* and *hope* that it were true.

What regard then are we to pay to this? Why, we must consider; that here is a Person from the other World, who proves his Mission by extraordinary Works, beyond the power of Man to perform; prophesied-of many ages before by the professed Servants of God, who are declared to have performed miraculous works themselves, by the most authentic History; the *Doctrine* he teaches tends to promote those Virtues, which our own Reason and Conscience approves of, and informs us to be our Duty; and he assures us of an eminent *Reward*, far above any thing that this world can boast of; and the whole scheme that is revealed is great and magnificent; worthy the nature of an immortal Being to pursue, and of the supreme God and Governor of the Universe to grant; being full of Bounty, Benevolence, and Love. And as we may be well assured, that no *bad* Being would ever so far counteract its own Nature, as to *persuade* us to the practise of Virtue; much less entice us to it, by the hopes of Glory, and Honour, and Immortality; we may safely conclude, that the Revelation must come from a *good* Being: and from the accomplishment of Prophecy we must conclude, that it comes from the *supreme* Being.

Being. So that we are in no danger of being deceived in this case to our Hurt; if we do but use our own natural Powers, and examine to the bottom of things.

“What though the *Magicians* are said to have done very extraordinary things before *Moses*; and *Simon Magus* did things, which the people did not distinguish from true Miracles; and false *Christs* may do great signs and wonders hereafter: yet, as in the two former cases, the opposers of the Truth were brought to own, that *Moses* and *Philip* both acted by a superior Power; so there is no doubt; but in the future signs and wonders of false *Christs*, the serious and rational Enquirer will be at no loss to find on which side the cause of Truth lies(*a*).”

For we do not believe on *Christ*, merely on account of the *Miracles* he wrought; of which there was a long series uncontroul'd, public at different times, of various sorts, commanding the Winds and Seas, and even Death itself; and after all, he received a farther Evidence from God by a Resurrection from the dead; as he himself had foretold: I say, we believe in *Christ*, not only on account of these *Miracles*; but also because he fulfilled the *Prophecies* of the ancient Prophets, taught so excellent a *Doctrine*, was so perfectly good and holy, and had a communication with God; which we are

(*a*) Dr. Sykes. *Hoadly*, Fol. Vol. I. p. 10, 12.

assured

assured of by the accomplishment of his Prophecies. And therefore even greater Miracles than he performed, if they were possible, ought not to draw a rational *Christian* from his Faith; because his Faith does not depend on *Miracles* alone, but on all these considerations jointly.

We see then, on how firm a footing *Christianity* is fixed; and what abundant Evidence God has given us, for what he expects us to believe: and how little Reason there is, to fear a rational Enquiry into it; or to use the civil Arm in its defense: when a free use of the Understanding, in a fair Examination of all the Arguments for or against it, will do so much more honour to the Cause; and be so much more agreeable to the Example of its Founder.

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THE SEVENTH LETTER.

ON MIRACLES.

AS a late Writer upon *Miracles* hath attempted to overthrow their Credibility; and consequently the Belief of all Revelation, as far as it is founded on them, by arguing *a priori* from their *Nature*; it will be necessary for *Me* to consider *his* Arguments.

He tells us; that a *Miracle* may accurately be defined, “a Transgression of the Laws of Nature, by a particular Volition of the Deity; or, by the Interposal of some invifible Agent.” Upon which I would obferve; that there is not one *Miracle* mentioned in the whole Scripture, that can be proved to agree with this Definition. The Laws of *Nature*, or, in other Words, the
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Laws of *God*, are never said to be transgressed by a *Miracle*, in any one of the sacred Writers; nor any thing like it once intimated: but the direct contrary appears, in the account of every *Miracle*, which is particularly described; the Cause being adequate to the Effect, according to the Laws of Nature, in all of them; wherever either any material Instruments are used, or the natural immaterial powers of spiritual Beings are exerted. Whereas, if the Effects were brought about contrary to the Laws of Nature, this would not be the case; but the Cause would at least be inadequate to the Effect, if not contrary to it. And therefore, “though constant Experience should assure us, (as Mr. *Hume* expresses it) that the Laws of Nature are firm and unalterable;” [as they certainly are:] yet there would arise from thence no proof against Miracles; because a *Miracle* is no Violation of them.

If a blind man was made to see, without any alteration in the organs of Sight; or a lame man was made to walk, while the Limb continued broken and unaltered; he would have, and not have, the use of the same Organs at the same Time; which is impossible: and to suppose Omnipotence itself can make these Organs perform their offices, (when by any accident they are made incapable of it,) without some alteration in them to supply their de-

fects ; is as absurd, as to suppose it done without any Power at all. For, what is Omnipotence ; without an actual Exertion of Power ? and where is the Exertion of Power ; if every thing continues as it did before ? These things therefore would be *contrary* to the Laws of Nature ; because the Effect would be produced, without an adequate Cause ; i. e. by a Cause incapable of producing it : and this would be the case universally of all Miracles supposed to be performed contrary to the Laws of Nature ; they must be *Impossibilities*. But that the Eye should see, and the Limb perform its operations, after being cured of their defects ; is no more *contrary* to the Laws of Nature, than the performance of their natural functions, before they were out of order. And if superior Beings are able by their natural Powers to perform such Cures as these, which it is impossible to disprove ; they act as agreeably to the Laws of Nature, as we do in our common actions(*a*). It is impossible to prove ; that God will not permit Beings superior to Man ; on some occasions to exert their natural Powers in this World, in actions which are above the Power of man to perform : and, in such cases, the action will not only be possible, but agreeable to the Laws of Nature ; and will direct us to refer the action to some Being superior to Man.

(*a*) Dr. Sam. Clarke's Evidences, p. 375.

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And, as this is the whole that a *Christian* needs contend for, upon the subject of *Miracles*; all dispute, whether a Miracle be possible or not; and whether it be contrary or agreeable to the Laws of Nature, will be nothing more than a dispute about the definition of a Word: for revealed Religion stands in need of no other kind of Signs, or Wonders, or Miracles, to support it; than merely the Interposition of some Being superior to Man, manifested by the performance of some action agreeable to the natural Powers of that Being, and superior to the Power of Man; and it is of no signification to the cause of Revelation, whether such an action be called a *Miracle*; or not. It is certain; that all the Miracles we meet with in the Scripture, which are distinctly explained to us in their circumstances, are of this nature; and were performed by Causes adequate to their Effects. When God created this World by his Command, it was performed by the *Logos* or *Word* of God: when *Noah* was to be preserved in the Flood, he was ordered to build an Ark to save him: when a withered Hand was to receive motion from the Will of Man, it was made whole like the other: when a Blind man was made to see, the Scales which obstructed his sight were removed: in all these cases, the Cause was adequate to the Effect; and, when we know not the method, by which any extraordinary

ordinary Effect mentioned in the Scripture was brought about; we have no more reason to suppose it to be *contrary* to the Laws of Nature, than those already mentioned.

St. *Peter* declares; that the healing of the lame man, at the beautiful gate of the Temple, was not performed by *Him*; but by the Power of *God*: the People wondered at the Cure, supposing it to be done by his own Power; but He disclaimed it. This was also the case, when *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were slain; (*Acts* v.) and the Magicians who opposed *Moses*, when they saw what *he* had done was *above* the Power of *Man*, concluded very justly; that it was done by the finger of *God*. They did not, and indeed could not argue, as the *Deists* do; that it was above the power of Man to perform, and therefore was not performed: but that it was above the power of Man, and therefore was done by a power *superior* to that of Man. To suppose an action *done* by the power of Man, which is *above* the power of Man; is to suppose the Cause inadequate to the Effect: and, consequently, a contradiction to the laws of Nature: but, when such an action is performed by the finger of *God*, the Cause is equal to the Effect; and the Laws of Nature are preserved.

Even when *Christ* himself performed his Miracles in the flesh, it does not appear, that he did *by his own hands* put in order the eyes of the blind;

blind; or perform any such action as possibly might be inconsistent, according to the Laws of Nature, with the incumbrance of the human Body: but the Power, which immediately acted was the *Holy Ghost*; and if the Holy Ghost did perform the Miracles by his *own natural* Power, there was nothing in them contrary to the laws of Nature. And we are assured; that it was the *Spirit* of God, which enabled *Christ*, while on Earth, to heal Diseases, cast-out Devils, raise the Dead, and work all sorts of Miracles, for confirmation of his divine Mission(*b*). He was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with Power (*c*); and was full of the Holy Ghost (*d*); and God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him (*e*); and he himself declares, that he cast out Devils by the Spirit of God (*f*); and says expressly, the Father which is in me, *He* doth the Works (*g*): so that, when he spat upon the ground, and made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind; the miraculous Cure was immediately and personally performed by the same Person, who raised him from the dead; who is called the *great Power of God*; by whom the Apostles also performed *their* Miracles.

And here it may be proper to make this *general* observation; that, wherever it is imagined,

(*b*) *Whitby* on I *John* v. 6. *Mat.* xii. 28. *Luke* iv. 18. 20. (*c*) *Acts* x. 38. (*d*) *Luke* iv. 1. (*e*) *John* iii. 34. (*f*) *Mat.* xii. 28. (*g*) *John* xiv. 10.

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that the laws of Nature are contradicted; the true state of the case is entirely mistaken: for the laws of Nature continue always the same; and, where there is any change in the effect which we observe, the change is made in the things themselves; that is, in the Essences or in the Properties. This is the case of Water, hardened into Ice; Wax, melted by Heat; or Gunpowder, when it is moistened: upon which alteration of their Properties, their Effects, though totally different from what they were before, will be as agreeable to the laws of Nature; as their contrary Effects were, before the change. As to the instance, mentioned by a late Writer, of Fire, which, without losing its Properties, does not burn Combustibles; I must beg leave to deny the Fact: for to suppose an adequate Cause not to produce its natural Effect, is equally absurd, as to imagine an Effect to be produced without an adequate Cause: which would not be a *Miracle*, but an *Impossibility*. God may deprive Fire of its burning quality; but then it will cease to be Fire: or he may deprive the Materials of their combustible Nature; but then they will cease to be Combustibles; or he may prevent their meeting together—but, if they continue to have the same Properties and are brought into contact; they must and will produce their natural Effects: or, in other words, they must and will observe the

the Law of their Natures, which God has appointed to them. And this they will do constantly and regularly, till he shall add or subtract or change some Circumstance or some Property in them; and then they will go on according to the Properties that still remain unchanged; and the new ones that have been superinduced: and all this will be as agreeable to the laws of Nature, as it is for a Bowl running-on in a strait line, and being struck by a visible or invisible Being, (it is all the same, either way) to change its direction; and continue its motion at an angle with the line it was first moving in: and to suppose the contrary to this, is to suppose they *lose* their Properties, whilst they *retain* them; and are changed, without any Alteration.

If it be argued, in opposition to this; that God can produce what Effect he pleases, by his own immediate Power: I answer, it is true; but then the laws of Nature are entirely out of the Question: and, the nature of created Beings not being at all concerned in the Effect, the whole must be resolved into the *divine* Power, as the adequate Cause; and then every thing possible will be accounted-for, from the nature of Omnipotence. But the Question we are considering does not relate to the *immediate* Power of God; but to his making use of *Instruments*; and producing such Effects by *them*, or by *their* means,

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as are contrary to the Natures with which he has endowed them

Now we know the difference of one thing from another, only by the difference of their *Properties*; (for we know the *Essence* of nothing) and we know the difference of their *Properties*, only by their Accidents and Effects; and, consequently, wherever we find a difference in these, we have reason to believe; there is an alteration in the things themselves: and it is very consistent in the Author of Nature, to make what change he pleases in the things themselves; but not to produce Effects by inadequate Causes. For, so far as the Causes are inadequate to the Effects, the Effects are produced by no Cause at all; which, if allowed to be *possible* in any one instance, may be *true* with regard to the production of the Universe; and will lead directly to Atheism. I shall give an instance, to explain what I mean: If a Person should walk upon the Water, as he does upon the solid Ground; either there must be an alteration made, in the properties of the Water; that is, it must be changed from what it was before; (though it may continue to be called by the same name) or there must be some alteration in the properties of the human Body; or the Body must be supported: it cannot possibly be done otherwise; any more *by* a Miracle, than *without* one: for a Miracle must be caused by something
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quate to the Effect wrought, and able to produce it; as much as if it were no Miracle. To deny this, is to make no difference between a *Miracle* and an *Impossibility*; which is all the *Deist* desires to be granted, in order to attack Revelation. In short, to imagine that Water, which at this moment is *not able* to support a Man, shall the next moment be *able* to support him; without any alteration or change, either in the Water or the Man; implies the same contradiction, as to suppose a thing to have the property of hardness, while it continues soft; of length, while it continues short; of bluntness, while it continues pointed: and to argue from the nature of Omnipotence, is nothing to the purpose. For, if there is no change made in the things themselves, but they continue just the same as they were before; there is no act of Omnipotence exerted: and they will continue to observe the Laws, which God gave them at their Creation.

It is no less absurd to suppose, that God ever makes use of *improper* Instruments to perform his Will. A God of infinite Power can have no Occasion to do it; for he can *give* to every Thing what properties he pleases; he can *change* and alter them, as he pleases; till they become *proper* Instruments to bring about his designs: or he can accomplish his Will, by his own *immediate* power; without the use of any Instru-

ments at all. And is it possible to conceive; that such a Being should make use of any thing, contrary to the Nature he gave it; and not rather adapt it to the end, for which he designed it to serve; or else perform his designs without it—that, in order to produce a Famine, he should send Plenty; and, to burn-up a Country, he should send Rain? or that, because he is Allpowerful, he should make use of an East, rather than a West wind, to carry the locusts out of *Egypt* into the *Red Sea*; [*Ex. x. 19.*] and drive them one way, by forcing them to move the contrary? And, when God has formed the human Body with all the marks of Wisdom we can conceive, by adapting every part to its particular use; is there any Sense in asserting, that, because he is Almighty, he could have made the several parts to serve the same purposes as well as they do, if they had been formed in any other manner; if the Bones were as soft as the Flesh, if the Muscles were as hard and solid as the Bones now are, if there were no Joints, nor Veins, nor Arteries, nor Nerves? Does not such a way of talking destroy the very Idea of his Wisdom, in having formed things as they are; and betray our own Ignorance and Folly? It is Nonsense, at the best; if not Impiety.

But farther; Mr. *Hume* seems to look upon every thing to be contrary to the Laws of Nature, which is contrary to *our* Experience. For
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he says; "Firm and unalterable Experience hath established the Laws of Nature." I suppose, he means; that firm and unalterable Experience certifies to us, and assures us, that there are certain Laws of Nature. And I allow, that we have reason to conclude from Experience; that there are certain Laws of Nature. But yet firm and unalterable Experience will never assure us of any future Event, even in our experimental Philosophy; unless we are perfectly certain, that the Circumstances were the same *before*, as they are *now*; in every particular—For a very little Accident, quite unobserved, may produce an Effect contrary to what we have ever before experienced; as may be instanced in the accidental moisture of the Sand, in casting Lead; and many other cases. And, when such Accidents happen in Experiments where they are unexpected, and sometimes perhaps are not to be accounted-for; a true Philosopher does not immediately cry out, this is contrary to the Laws of Nature; only because it is contrary to his Experience. If this were the case, he must look upon every thing that appears extraordinary; and indeed, every effect he had never before experienced; to be contrary to the Laws of Nature. Thus, when the King of *Siam* disbelieved the *Dutch* Ambassador's account; that in *Holland* the Water was so hard in cold weather, as to be walked upon; he argued, like Mr. *Hume*, from his

his Experience of the Laws of Nature; *establisbed on firm and unalterable Principles*: he considered the Laws of his own *Climate*, as the Laws of *Nature*; and thought, there were no Laws of Nature, but what he had experienced at *Siam*: and, if we were to put the Word *Ice*, instead of the Word *Miracle*, into the Argument; his Majesty's Experience will prove against the existence of *Ice*, as compleatly as Mr. *Hume*'s does against a Miracle. *e. g.*

“As firm and unalterable Experience has establisbed the Laws [of Nature;] the proof against the existence of *Ice*, from the very Nature of the Fact, is as intire; as any Argument from Experience can possibly be imagined (*b*): and, as an uniform Experience amounts to a Proof, there is a direct and full Proof from the Nature of the Fact against the existence of *Ice*(*i*).”

But we can hardly imagine Mr. *Hume* meant to build his Argument (from firm and unalterable Experience) merely upon *his* never having experienced a Miracle; but perhaps upon the nonexperience of all ages in this respect, from the beginning of the World. But there is no such *Postulatum* to be granted. No such non-experience in Fact: we have many accounts of Miracles, in our most ancient and best authenticated Histories: and, though the *Deist* does

(*b*) *Hume's Essays*, 180. (*i*) *Ibid.* 181.

not *believe* these accounts; he has no right to assume it, without Proof, that they are all *false*. Especially, as he knows it to be a question, among learned men of the best understanding; whether *spiritual* Beings do not sometimes interfere in *human* affairs, and cause *Appearances* very contrary to common *Experience*.

In short; the Argument against Miracles, which is drawn from Experience in natural Philosophy, or from the common Course of inanimate Nature; where we take it for granted, that all the circumstances relating to the event, are entirely the same; is altogether frivolous, when applied to *Miracles*: and must be so, in every other instance, where a *moral* Agent is supposed to interfere. A Ball may fall to the ground 1000, or 10000 times; but, if any one should choose to stop it in its fall, the Argument from Experience would be of no kind of service to prove that it would fall to the ground the next time it was thrown up. And the same is the case, in every miraculous Interposition. The probability of it does not at all depend upon the general Course of inanimate Nature; but upon the Will of the Agent who is supposed to interfere. The specific Gravity of the human Body will make no argument against a Person's walking upon the Water; if he be supported by an adequate Power: But more of this by and by.

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I shall go-on with Mr. *Hume's* Objection. If, by constant uniform Experience, he does not mean the constant uniform Experience of all Ages from the beginning of the World; but only the constant uniform Experience of men, for the last sixteen or seventeen hundred years; his assertion is very innocent, and what no consistent Protestant needs to contradict. For he does not surely expect his Reader to conclude; that, because no Miracles have happened, *since* that time; therefore no Miracles happened, either *at* that time; or *before* it. Miracles, says the *Christian*, are necessary to establish a Revelation; and no new Revelation has been, or can be, established without them; for Reasons already mentioned. About 1700 years ago, God gave a Revelation to mankind, which He established by Miracles; and Miracles have never since that time been experienced, because no new Revelation has been given.—Will the *Deist* conclude from hence, that they did not happen at the time specified; because they have never happened since? or, because God does not *often* interfere visibly in the affairs of Men, therefore he *never* does? or, because he does not interfere upon *trifling* occasions, therefore he does not interfere in affairs of the *greatest importance*; to convince men of his Being, of his Providence over the World as a moral Governor, of a Resurrection

urrection from the dead, and a future Judgment; and to put an end to Idolatry and human Sacrifices, and all the abominable Rites and Cerimonies of the Heathen Worship?

Here the *Deist* is conscious of his Weakness; and does not dare to enter into the question, as relative to the important *End* which Miracles are designed to serve: because it seems so extremely probable, that God might reveal his Will to Man, upon such important Occasions; and Miracles would be necessary to give credit to a Revelation as coming from him. But he artfully avoids considering the subject in this Light; strips the question of all circumstance, relation, consequence, and connection with the Wisdom and Goodness of *God*, and the Benefit of *Man*; and then asks gravely, whether Miracles be *probable*, or not, in their own Nature: As if every act of an intelligent Being (and such are all Miracles) did not depend on Circumstances. But, to answer Mr. *Hume* in his own way—If Miracles are, *in their own nature*, proper *Attestations* to the Interposition of some Being superior to Man; then there is something in their Nature, which makes it probable they will be performed; whenever it shall please God to reveal his Will to Man. Miracles therefore are *in their own Nature* as *probable*,

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as

as it is that God will reveal his Will to Man; which was never looked-upon as *improbable*, even by the heathen Philosophers.

That some Being of superior Power to Man, is *able* to support a man upon the water, or cure a broken limb, or a defect of the sight immediately, is as unquestionable; as it is, that a Man has the power to stop a Ball which is thrown into the Air, from falling to the Ground by its natural Gravitation: But, whether he *will* actually do it or not, depends entirely (as I have observed) upon the Will of the Agent; and not in the least upon the nature of the Action, but upon the motives and circumstances, by which the Agent is influenced. The nature of the Action is no farther concerned, than only whether it be in the Power of the Agent to perform it. So that, if we do not consider the Will and Design of God; and Miracles, as serving to promote that Will and Design; the question, whether Miracles are in their own Nature probable or improbable, is too naked to be answered: and we may as well inquire, whether it is probable or improbable, that the *Iroquois* will send Embassadors next month to the *Cherokees*. For, as the Actions of all moral Agents depend upon Circumstances; if you take away the Circumstances, there is no motive left for Choice: and, if you take away our Knowledge of the
circum-

circumstances; and, consequently, our knowledge of the motives; we have no *data* left to judge by, whether they will act one way or the other. And this is the state of the question, as it is here proposed by Mr. *Hume* to be examined.—So that, though he had succeeded ever so well, in proving that Miracles are improbable; considered in themselves, “as Transgressions of the Law of Nature, by a particular Volition of the Deity;” (according to *his* Definition of a Miracle;) yet his Argument would not at all affect the Miracles of the old and new Testament; which are all of them Interpositions of Providence, *agreeable* to the Laws of Nature; and Attestations to a divine Revelation, calculated for the good of Mankind, in affairs of the greatest Importance. This it is, that makes the difference between the Scripture Miracles and all others; and renders *these* worthy of the greatest Regard; whilst all *others*, how well so ever attested, may be safely neglected: because it is not only highly *improbable*, but absolutely *incredible*; that the supreme God and Father of the Universe should interfere in the affairs of this World, either personally or by command, in a miraculous manner, for no reason at all; (which must be the case of Miracles, considered in themselves, and as stripped of all circumstance and connection;) or for a *trifling* one.

End of the SEVENTH LETTER.

Page 901, Note. See this argument of Mr. *Hume's* fully answered, in a Pamphlet intituled, *Thoughts on the Nature of the Grand Apostasy*, p. 222.

A N
I N Q U I R Y
I N T O T H E
Opinions of the Learned Christians,
B O T H
A N C I E N T and M O D E R N,
C O N C E R N I N G T H E
G E N E R A T I O N O F J E S U S C H R I S T;
I N O R D E R T O P R O V E,
That it was the same Word of God, who was in
the Beginning with God before the Creation
of the World, that suffered for Mankind;
and not any other Soul or Spirit that
was afterwards created.

P R E F A C E.

“ I do not think; says the learned Dr. *Whit-*
 “ *by*, that I can do any thing more ac-
 “ ceptable to God the Father, or to our
 “ Saviour, or to the Christian Doctrine, or the
 “ Christian Church, and that most celebrated
 “ Part of it, the Church of *England*; than by
 “ asserting to our heavenly Father, (to whom
 “ alone belongs the Right of fixing the Laws
 “ of Conscience;) and to Christ (who is the
 “ only Leader and Master of the Church;) that
 “ entire Authority of framing Articles of Faith;
 “ which, with the greatest detriment to the
 “ Church and Faith, not the Romish Church
 “ only, but those also, who boast themselves to
 “ be, above others, the genuine Sons of the
 “ Church of *England*; yea, even her Priests,
 “ have

“ have ascribed to the Fathers, Councils,”
&c(a).

What the learned Doctor has here advanced is so certain, that we can no otherwise be assured whether any one Article of our Faith be divine, or human; founded on the Word of God, or merely on the Authority of Man. And what this very respectable writer has here said in general, I shall, in the following pages, apply to the particular Doctrine of the Generation of *Jesus Christ*, in order to recover to the Philosophical Christians a fundamental Article of Faith; which, though universally believed by the Common People, hath been explained away, ever since the Council of *Nice*, in the Theories of almost all the different sects of learned Men, who have undertaken to lay Christianity before the World as a System.

The Article I mean is This; that it was the *Lord of Glory*, (I Cor. ii. 8.) or the Lord who bought us; or, in other words, that it was the *same divine Person, Nature, and Substance*, which was in the beginning with God; that *felt* the pains of the Cross, and *suffered* for mankind.

This is the Doctrine; which, in *St. Paul's* days, was to the *Jews*, a *Stumbling-block*; and to the *Greeks*, *Foolishness*; I Cor. i. 23. and seems to have been looked-upon in the same light, for these 1400 years, by the Councils; and by

(a) *Whitby's Differt. de Script. Interp. Præf. Sect. I.*
almost

almost all the different Sects of Christians(*a*).—The *Cerinthians* denied it; out of a pretence, that the divine Nature or Substance, which they called *Christ*, left the man *Jesus* at his Death—The *Sabellians* denied it; by maintaining, that the *Logos* was *God*; and that *Christ* had no existence, before his Birth of the Virgin *Mary*: (*alium esse Dei verbum, alium Christum*(*b*);) and that it was *this Christ* who suffered.—The *Socinians* denied it; by maintaining, that *Christ* was a mere Man; *ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος* actuated indeed by the Spirit of God dwelling in him; but his Sufferings were only those of a mere Man—And the *Athanasians* deny it; by asserting, that the Essence of the *Son of God* is impassible.

And this is the doctrine of all the *European Churches*, whether Protestant or Papist; who receive the four first general Councils, as the Tests of Heresy.

All these Sects, though differing from one another in some particulars, yet agree to maintain the same Conclusion; viz. that the pains of the Cross were not suffered or felt by that *Being, Substance, Essence, or Person*, who was *in the beginning with God*; but by some other who had no existence till above 4000 years after the Creation of the World; and then was joined to him in the Body, which was born of the

(*a*) Let. I. p, 19.

(*b*) Let. I. p. 29.

Virgin *Mary*. And the reason, upon which the *Athanasians* build their opinion, is this; that the Son of God was *generated from the Substance of the Father*; and was therefore *impassible*.

Thus one of the most important Articles of Christianity; I may venture to say, the most important of them all; has been long given-up and lost, among the philosophical Christians, upon the Authority of a *metaphysical* Argument; against the plain History of the New Testament. And from hence arises the necessity, (if we would maintain, that it was the *Lord of Glory* that bought us, by his *own* sufferings, and *humiliation*; and not a mere *Spirit*, which was *joined* to him;) that we examine this metaphysical Argument to the bottom: *viz.* whether the *Son of God* is indeed *generated* from the Father's *Substance*, and therefore *impassible*; or whether this notion is founded upon a false Philosophy.

The discussing of this question will help to clear the Christian Religion from many difficulties, unknown to the Apostles and primitive Christians; in which the present System of Orthodoxy is involved: and I shall venture to add, that those Divines have much to answer for; who have introduced these difficulties in the way to truth, which for many ages have prevented, in a great measure, the propagation
of

of Christianity among the *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Deists*. And it is in vain for the Christian Divines to complain, as they do, of the increase of Deism; whilst they themselves are determin'd to defend these Errors, at all Events; merely because they find them already introduced.

I have not the least doubt; that it was such stumbling blocks, as we shall meet with in the following pages; which have been looked-upon as orthodox, and inculcated as essential doctrines of Christianity, without any authority from Scripture; and not any thing that can be found in the New Testament; which prevailed with *Bati*, the Prince of the *Tartars*, to prefer *Mahometism* to Christianity(c). He could never have done this; if Christianity had been represented to him in its native simplicity. And let but this fundamental Article of Christianity be restored; that God so loved the World, that he gave his only Son (and not the *Person* of his only Son, abstracted from his *Essence*; nor *another* Spirit, that was *joined* to him;) to suffer for Mankind: and by that amazing instance of his Love, reconciled the World to Himself; and gained over such prodigious numbers to Christianity, in opposition to all the powers of the Earth: and we should soon find, it would now have the same effect upon both the Reason and the Passions of man-

(c) See page 873.

E e e e e 2

“ kind,

kind; as formerly. But, while we continue to be ashamed of this doctrine; and argue, that *we must not think so meanly of the Son of God; as to imagine his Essence to be subject to the sufferings of the flesh* (d): we lose the whole Spirit of the Gospel Dispensation, and confound ourselves with metaphysical subtilties; and are not able to explain the Christian System, or even what is called the Apostles Creed, without loading it with a thousand inconsistencies and contradictions; which it is impossible for any man of Sense to believe.

Epiphanius, who has written so largely and so learnedly against the Heretics; gives us the orthodox doctrine of the sufferings of Christ, as it was understood in his time, and has been understood ever since; in the following words—

“ But, if the impassible Word of God suffered these things; [the indignities before mentioned] the suffering was not corporeal, distinct from his impassibility; and yet *not distinct*, because it was well-pleasing to him, that though he did not suffer, *μὴ πάχοντος αὐτοῦ*, yet the sufferings should be reckoned to him; and as a spot in a garment does not reach the body of him who wears it, and yet is RECKONED to him; so God suffered in the Flesh, his Divinity suffering nothing. But the suffering of the Flesh, which flesh was borne by

(d) Bp. Pearson.

“ the

“ the Divinity, was reckoned to the Divinity ;
 “ that our Salvation might be by him.” *Ancor.*
 ch. 36.

Εἰ δὲ ταῦτα πέπονθεν ὁ ἀπαθὴς τῷ Θεῷ Λόγος, ἄρα τὸ πάθος
 σωματικόν ἐστιν ἐκλὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀπαθείας· καὶ ἐκ ἐκλὸς πάλιν, διὰ τὸ
 εὐδοκῆσαι, καὶ τοίγε μὴ πάσχοντος αὐτοῦ, εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὸ πάθος λελόγισ-
 θαι. Καὶ καθάπερ ἐν ἱμαλίῳ σπῖλος τὸ σῶματ' ἑορῶντος ὁ φθάνει,
 ὁ δὲ σπῖλος τῷ ἱμαλίῳ εἰς τὸν ἑορῶντα λογίζεται· ὥτως ὁ Θεὸς πέπονθεν
 ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τῆς Θεότητος αὐτοῦ μηδὲν παθέσης· εἰς δὲ τὴν Θεότητα τὸ
 πάθος τῆς σαρκὸς ὑπὸ τῆς Θεότητος φορημένης ἐλογίσθη· ἵνα ἐν τῇ Θεότητι
 ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία γένηται.

Here we see, in the first place ; that, if the
 Christ, whom *St. Paul* declares to be passible ;
 (παθητὸς ὁ Χριστός, *Acts* xxvi. 23.) be the same Be-
 ing, whom *Epiphanius* means by the Word of
 God, and declares to be impassible ; the two
 doctrines are contradictory to one another.
 And 2dly. that if there was no other suffering,
 but that of the flesh, which was borne by the
 Divinity ; the suffering of the *Logos* was only
 nominal. The Mahometans have improved
 upon this notion : and declare, that we must
 not think so meanly of the Son of God ; as to
 imagine that he suffered at all.

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LETTER THE EIGHTH

A N
INQUIRY, &c.

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

How the Disputes, concerning the antemundane Generation of Jesus Christ, first began in the Christian Church; and the Homoöusian Doctrine was established, as an Article of Faith.

THERE never was any thing of so much detriment to the progress of Christianity, as the disputes which have arisen among Christians upon *metaphysical* questions; and the carrying them on to such a degree of heat and rage, as to anathematise, excommunicate, and murder one another; upon account of
of

of their differences about such subjects. The ill consequences of these dissensions were not put an end to, as might have been hoped and expected, by the decisions of the Councils; but those very decisions, being founded upon a false Philosophy; and huddled-up (*a*) into a Creed, without due consideration; have been teeming ever since with new and unforeseen monsters; and have overwhelmed the whole Christian System with confusion.

In the following pages, it is proposed to inquire into the opinions of the learned Christians, both ancient and modern, concerning the *ante-mundane* Generation of *Jesus Christ* from the Substance of the Father; as it was understood and established at the *Nicene* Council: the Reasons, by which that opinion has been supported; and the Authority, upon which the belief of it hath been bound upon all succeeding Ages.

In the first ages of Christianity, the Christians believed in God the Father Almighty; and in *Jesus Christ*, his only Son, our Lord; and, till they undertook to explain the manner, in which the Son of God was supposed to be generated from the Father's Substance; they found no difficulty in believing, that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin *Mary*, suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, &c. and, during

(*a*) See *Ben Mordecai's* first letter to *Elisha Levi*, p. 52, and 188.

this simple Faith, there was no mention made of two Gods (*b*); but all acknowledged the Father to be the *only* true God, till the time of *Noetus* and *Sabellius*; whose Heresy, if we believe *Basil* and *Epiphanius*, consisted in the belief of one singular Substance in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (*c*); and these accused the orthodox Christians, that they believed in two Gods; the Father and the Son.—To this accusation, the *Antenicens* answered; that, although they allowed, the Son of God was called by the name of God; and the Father and Son were two distinct and different Beings; the Son being ἕτερος τῷ πατρὶος ἀριθμῷ distinct from the Father, in Number (*d*); yet there could be but One God, because there was but one *Supreme* and *Unoriginate*: and it was upon this principle, that the Church condemned *Sabellius*, as an Atheist and Blasphemer; because he maintained, the Son of God was God over all; ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός (*e*).—This is what *Eusebius* declares to be in his time the doctrine of the Church: “If they fear,” says he, “least we profess *Two* “ Gods; let them know, that, although we “ profess the Son to be God, yet there is only “ ONE God:” namely, He, who alone is

(*b*) *Whitby* Disq. mod. p. 178. (*c*) Letter I. p. 27.
 (*d*) *Just. Mart.* Dial. cum *Tryph.* p. 358.—Let. I. p. 167.
 —*Whitby* Disq. mod. p. 85. (*e*) *Euseb.* Eccles. Theol. l. II. c. 4.

without beginning, who is unbegotten, who possesseth divinity of Himself, who is the cause of the Son's existence, by whom even the Son confesseth that he hath life; Jo. vi. 57. and who gave to the Son to have life in Himself; Jo. v. 26. from whence the Son teacheth, that the Father is our God, and his God; Jo. xx. 7. and whom the Apostle teacheth to be the Head of the Son; Eph. i. 22. Now if there is but One Principle and Head; how can there be Two Gods (g)? Is not He the only One God, who hath no Superior? to whom no other was the cause of his existence? who, as his own peculiarity and right, possessing divinity, unbegotten, and without beginning, made the Son Partaker of his Life and Divinity; put all things in subjection under Him, commanded Him, taught Him, gave Him all things, glorified Him, exalted Him above all, declared Him king of all, delivered up to Him all judgment; to whom the Son offers up his Prayers, whom he obeys, to whom he gives thanks, and whom he teacheth us to believe, that He is the only true God; whom he professeth to be greater than himself; and would have us all know, that He, who exists above all, is even His God (h)?

(g) *Athanasius* speaks in the same manner; ὡς περ δὲ πλά
ἀρχὴν, καὶ κατὰ τὸ εἶς Θεός. Orat. 5. (h) *Whitby* Disq.
mod. p. 175.—*Euseb.* l. I. c. 11.—Reply to *Waterland's*
Def. 15.

Here we see the pure and primitive Faith, as it is in the Scripture; before it was adulterated by intermixing a false Philosophy with the doctrines of the New Testament.—But the Council of *Nice* was not contented with such proofs of the Unity; as were found in the Word of God, and had been maintained in the Church till that time; but chose to answer the *Sabellians*, upon the principles of the then-reigning Philosophy: and accordingly they decreed, that the Son of God was *of*, or *out of*, the Substance of God; and that the Father and Son were *one God*, because they were both of the *same indivisible Substance*: and, in their disputes with the *Eusebians*, instead of keeping to the words of Scripture, that Christ was, ἐκ Θεῶ, of or from God; they substituted their own Comment, in the place of the Text; and required them to subscribe, as to an article of Faith, under the penalty of an anathema; that Christ was *of* or *from* the Substance of God: ἐκ τῆς ὁσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ (i). Thus setting their own opinions upon a level with the Word of God.

It is true; the most learned and sensible of the *Homöousians* were conscious, that this proceeding was wrong: but probably they were overborne by votes, or perhaps by some other reason, to act contrary to their judgement. *Irenæus*, who lived before the Council of *Nice*;

(i) *Cudworth Intel. Syf.* 608.

hath written a whole Chapter, to prove the Generation of the Son inexplicable: and all the Fathers since that time acknowledged it to be inscrutable; neither known to Angels, nor Arch-angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers; but only to the Father who begat, and the Son who was begotten(k). *Alexander of Alexandria* tells us, that *John* concealed the Generation of the *Logos*; because it was incomprehensible to Men and Angels: and we cannot, without impiety, dive into the mystery(l). *Basil* says, we ought not to ascribe any thing to God; but what is ascribed to him in the *Scripture*: and ought not to speak of God, but in *Scripture Terms*(m). *Eusebius* declares; that the confusion and disturbance, introduced into the Church, was owing to the use of unscriptural phrases(n). *Athanasius* himself tells us, that the *Nicene Council* at first proposed only to use scriptural words and phrases against the *Arians*; as, that the Son was of the Father; and *Christ* was the Son of God: but, says *Athanasius*, when they found that the *Eusebians*(o) would evade all these expressions by equivo-

(k) *Whitby* Dis. mod. pref. xxvi.—*Iren.* l. ii. c. 48. p. 176. Edit. *Grabe.* (l) *De Vera fide*, 120.—*Burnet* against *Hill*, p. 48. (m) *Contra Eunom.* l. ii. p. 44.

(n) *Theod.* l. i. c. 12.

(o) The Faith of *Eusebius* of *Cæsarea* upon this subject was that of the most ancient Fathers: but, because it confessed a Subordination of the Son to the Father, it is frequently

equivocation; [that is, when they found them ready to subscribe to the words of Scripture, in a different sense from their own;] they conceived themselves necessitated more plainly to declare, what they meant by the being *of* God, or *out of* God; and therefore added, that the Son was of the *Substance* of God(*p*). Thus we see the *Athanasians* were not contented with a subscription to the words of Scripture; which, they were conscious, was the only subscription they had any right to require: but insisted upon a subscription to their own Interpretation and Comment; which they knew they had no right to do.

And not only private Men, but the Councils also, saw the inconvenience, if not the wickedness, of restraining the terms of Communion in this manner; as appears, from their endeavour to prevent others from doing the same; and ordering, in respect to some articles, that no farther addition should be made: “like an in-
quently represented as *Arianism*; notwithstanding it is founded upon the above and many other plain Texts of Scripture; and is fairly acknowledged by *Petavius*, *Cudworth*, *Huetius*, *Jurieu*, &c. to have been the general opinion of Antiquity; long before *Arius* was born.—So that men have for many ages been afraid to maintain the Supremacy of the Father; for fear of being looked upon as *Arians*. And yet they dare not deny, that the greatest of all natural Perfections belongs to the Father *only*; and that is, UNORIGINATE SELFEXISTENCE.—Let. I. Note X.

(*p*) *Cudworth*, 608.

“tempe-

“temperate Father; who, because he knows he
 “does ill, enjoins temperance to his Sons; but
 “continues to be intemperate himself(*q*).”

But their Example prevailed above their Precepts; and succeeding Councils saw, that they themselves had the same right, authority, and power, to establish the Pope's Supremacy, and the Worship of Images; that the *Nicene* Council, or any other, had to establish the *homöousian* doctrine.

The conduct of *Eusebius* was very extraordinary; upon this occasion. He wrote to his Church, that he agreed to the anathema against *Arius*; because he had used unscriptural expressions: such as these, that “there was [a
 “time] when the Son was not; and that he existed, ἐξ ἑκ ὧν and that he did not exist, before
 “he was begotten (*r*);” (phrases, which he had certainly a right to use, in explaining his own meaning; though he had no authority to impose them as articles of Faith on other men:) and yet this same *Eusebius* signed to the unscriptural word *homöousios*, which was not only put into the *Nicene* Creed; but imposed upon all Christians, as an article of Faith, under an anathema. Upon which, I shall beg leave to quote the words of Dr. *Jer. Taylor*; as being directly in point—

(*q*) *Taylor's* Lib. of Proph. ii. § 34, 31. (*r*) *Niceph.*
 viii. cap. 22.

“This

“ This I say; not that I believe it unlawful
“ or unsafe for the Church, or any of the *An-*
“ *tistites Religionis*, or any wise man, to extend
“ his own Creed to any thing; that may cer-
“ tainly follow from any one of the articles
“ [which he believes]: but I say, that no such
“ deduction is fit to be *pressed* on others; *as an*
“ *Article of Faith*: and that every deduction,
“ that is so made, unless it be such a thing as is
“ *at first* evident to *all*; is but sufficient to make
“ a *Human Faith*, nor can it amount to a *Divine*:
“ much less can it be obligatory to bind a person
“ of a different persuasion to subscribe, under
“ pain of losing his Faith, or being a Heretic.
“ For it is a demonstration; that nothing can
“ be necessary to be believed, under pain of
“ damnation; but such propositions, of which
“ it is *certain*, that God hath spoken and taught
“ them to us; and of which it is *certain*, that
“ this is the sense and purpose. For, if the
“ sense be uncertain, we can no more be obliged
“ to believe it in a *certain* sense; than we are
“ obliged to believe it at all, if it were not *cer-*
“ *tain*, that God delivered it. But if it be only
“ certain, *that God spake it*; and not certain, *to*
“ *what Sense*; our Faith is to be as indetermi-
“ nate, as its Sense. And it can be no other,
“ in the Nature of the Thing; nor is it conso-
“ nant to God’s Justice to believe of him, that
“ he can or will require more.—And this I also
affirm;

“ affirm; although the Church of any one de-
“ nomination, or represented in a Council,
“ shall make the deduction or declaration(s).”

However, it was by the Authority of the Church, represented in a Council; that *human* Articles were first set upon a level with the Word of God: and an example was given to all succeeding generations; to add what they pleased to the words of Scripture, by way of comment; and then establish that comment, by an arbitrary decree. And though perhaps it may be said; that they *meant no harm*, they only *explained* the words of Scripture, they only *guarded* against Heresy, they only *added* the single word *Substance*, to *ascertain* the sense which they believed to be orthodox; yet, as this doctrine was enforced by Violence, it was followed by a scene of Blood and Cruelty, that almost ruined the whole Christian Church. This was the first public and open Apostasy of the Church, from the Word of God to the determinations of Men; and proved the seed, the root, the foundation of all the established Errors, which have from that time to this infested the Christian Faith. The Criterion of Truth and Orthodoxy was no longer confined to the *Scripture*; or *Christian Verity*: But an *other* Rule of Faith sprung-up, founded upon Tradition and the Decrees of Councils; which

(s) *Taylor's Lib. of Proph. sect. i. 12.*

was

was called the *Catholic Religion*: and these two Rules of Faith frequently contradicted one another, in such material articles; as at length divided the Church into what *may be* called two different Religions.—The *Papists*, adhering to Tradition and the Decrees of the Church; maintained all the Errors, that had been introduced by those means: such as prayers for the Dead, prayers to Saints and Angels, the worship of Images, Transubstantiation, and other Errors unknown to the Christian Verity, or Scripture. And the *Protestants*, on the other hand, adhering to the *Christian Verity*, rejected all these doctrines; and thereby got rid of numberless absurdities and contradictions: but, as they did not keep strictly to the first Principle of their Reformation, in receiving the Scripture or *Christian Verity* as the *only* Rule of Faith; but unadvisedly joined with it the decrees of the four first General Councils, (commonly so called) and other Articles of human composition, not expressed in Scripture Terms; they still continue entangled in many inconsistencies and contradictions, wherever these *different* Rules of Faith happen to disagree. An instance of the mischief which has arisen from hence to the Christian Religion, will appear very manifestly in the next Chapter; with regard to the *homöousian* doctrine.—

CHAPTER II.

That the Homöousian doctrine is inconsistent with the Sufferings of Christ, and his Descent from Heaven; as revealed in the New Testament, and understood by the primitive Christians: and is only supported by the arbitrary decrees of the Homöousian Councils.

WHILE the metaphysical question, concerning the eternal Generation of the Son from the Father's *Substance*, went no farther than the Learned; and Christians did not draw Consequences from it, which subverted the fundamental Articles of Christianity; it was of no great signification to the Body of the common people, how it was understood by the Learned: and therefore *Constantine*, in his excellent epistle to *Alexander* and *Arius*, calls it a vain question; ill begun, and more unadvisedly published; a fruitless controversy, the product of idle hours; a matter so nice, so obscure, so intricate; that it was neither to be explained by the Clergy, nor understood by the Laity; but most dangerous, when taught, least it should introduce Discord or Blasphemy(*a*).—But since this and such like ques-

(*a*) *Socrat. Eccl. Hist. B. I. ch. vii.*—*Taylor's Lib. of Proph. sect. ii. No. 26.*—See *Append. No. IV.*

tions have been made the Tests of Heresy; and the lives and liberties of the common people are concerned in them, as is the case in *England*; and the discord and blasphemy, which the Emperor foretold, have been long ago introduced into the Church; it is high time to examine this question to the bottom: and not be afraid to be looked-upon as rash and inconsiderate, upon that account: since nothing of a more dangerous nature can possibly arise from our Inquiries; than from suffering an opinion to go-on in the Church unquestioned, from which even those, who call themselves the Orthodox, have drawn such conclusions, as contradict the plainest and most fundamental Articles of the New Testament: as hath been already observed, in the Postscript to the third Letter.

It is not so great a wonder, that the *homöousian* doctrine was at first admitted into the Church; as that it was continued, after Christians were sensible of its fatal consequences. For, when it was first introduced, many believed, according to the Philosophy then in fashion; not only that the Son of God, but Angels also, and the Souls of Men were *consubstantial* with God; and generated from the divine Substance(*b*): and for a long time
Christians

(*b*) *Cicero* says; *audiebam Pythagoram, Pythagoreosque incolas pene nostros, qui essent Italici Philosophici quondam*
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Christians did not seem to apprehend, that any thing would be concluded from this doctrine; contrary to the descent of *Christ* from Heaven, or his Sufferings for Mankind. But after Christians began to examine more strictly and philosophically into the consequences of it, they found themselves involved in unsuspected and inextricable difficulties: for, if the Souls of Men were *consubstantial* with God; it followed, from the Principles of the *Athanasians*; that the Souls of Men were God: for the *Athanasians* held, that whatsoever is *consubstantial* with God, is God(c). It followed also, with regard to *Jesus Christ*; that, if He was *consubstantial* with the Father; he must be impassible, and incapable of local motion; and consequently, in direct contradiction to the

dam nominati, nunquam dubitâsse; quin ex universamente divina delibatos animos haberemus. *Cato Maj.* c. 21. And *Epiphanius* says; Particulam quandam Dei, eamque immortalem esse prædicant *Stoïci*. *Her.* v. p. 12.

Tertullian says; Tu non tantum factus, sed ex ipsius (Dei) Substantia animatus, *adv. Prax.* c. 5.—And *Jerom* tells us; that *Origen* taught, omnes rationales Naturas, i. e. Patrem, Filium & Spiritum S. Angelos, Potestates, Dominationes, cæterasque Virtutes, ipsum quoque Hominem secundum animæ dignitatem unius esse Substantiæ. *Epist. ad Avit.*—And *Lactantius* says; denique omnibus Angelis, quos idem Deus de Spiritu suo figuravit. *Epist. cxlii.* Edit. *Davis*.

Reply to *Waterland's* Def. 55, 285, 266, 328.

(c) *Cudworth*, 608 to 611.

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New Testament, he could neither descend from Heaven, nor suffer on the Cross.

The first of these notions, viz. that the Souls of Men were *consubstantial* with God, was so palpably absurd; that by degrees it grew out of fashion: but the *Consubstantiality* of the Son continued to be an article of Faith, both among the ancients and moderns.

However, the *Antenicens* were so far from holding the consequences of this doctrine, which have been since admitted; that they believed the Son to be finite, visible and passible: as appears by several quotations from them, in the third Letter. And Bishop Bull confesses fairly; that almost all the Catholic Writers, before the days of *Arius*, seem not to have known any thing of the Invisibility or Immensity of the Son of God: and speak of him in such a manner; as if, even in respect of his divine nature, he was finite, visible, and confined in place. For, when they would prove; that the Person, who appeared and conversed with the Patriarchs, was the Son of God; they generally made use of this disjunctive argument: He, who was then seen, was either the Son of God; or a created Angel; or God the Father—That he was not a created Angel, they concluded; because he was stiled by the Holy Ghost, *Jehovah*; or
God:

God:—that He was not the Father, they prove; because the Father is immense, filling all places, and circumscribed by none—for which reason it is impious to entertain a thought, that he appeared in any place and small corner of the Earth:—and by the same argument they teach, that the Son is visible(*e*).

Bishop *Bull*, who believed the Son to be equally immense and omnipotent as the Father(*f*); makes a faint effort to get rid of this argument, which the primitive Fathers made use of; by saying, “Perhaps they meant no more; than only that the Son condescended to appear, by some *external Symbols* of his Presence(*g*).” But what a palpable Evasion must this have been; when Christ appeared so often to *Moses*, as a man; and spake to him face to face, as a man speaketh to his Friend(*h*)?—Was this no more than an external Symbol? was it not a personal appearance?—However, the Bishop immediately answers his own Objection; and replies very justly—“If the appearance [they speak of] was only by Symbols; even God the Father, it might be thought, might equally in this manner have manifested himself to men; without any di-

(*e*) *Bulli* op. p. 267.—Let. I. p. 57.

(*f*) *Bulli*

op. p. 267, 272.

(*g*) Certis quibusdam in locis sensibilia suæ Præsentiae & Symbola & Signa exhibuisse.

(*h*) Ex. xxxiii. 2.

“minu-

“minution of his Majesty.” To which he gives no other answer, but only tells us flatly; that truly the primitive Fathers think otherwise: for, in their opinion, God the Father never was, nor ever could be, seen of any one; not even by any assumed Symbols of his presence⁽ⁱ⁾: And this doctrine of the Son’s Visibility and finite Nature, Bishop *Bull* tells us, runs through the writings not of a few; but almost all the primitive Fathers before *Arius*^(k).

The Bishop here affects a strange surprize, that the *Ante-nicene* Fathers should speak in this manner; and cries out, *ad ista dicta Patrum quis non obstupescat!* But the wonder lies on the other side of the question; viz. how the *Nicenes* could venture to introduce a doctrine into the Church; so directly opposite to the primitive Faith, and the plain doctrine of the New Testament. For the *Antenicens* believed, that the Son of God was the Angel of the Covenant^(l); and, consequently, both *passible* ^(m) and capable of *local motion*. And this ancient Faith continued in repute among the Christians; till *Au’stine*, observing that it was inconsistent with the *homoöusian* Doctrine established at *Nice*, did all he could to confute it, and establish the *homöousian* doctrine in its stead: which led the Christians into insuperable difficulties. For it

(i) *Bulli* Op. 268, 275. (k) *Ib.* 267. (l) *Let.* I.
Note XIV. (m) *Let.* I.

followed undeniably; that, if *Jesus Christ* was of the *infinite* and *impassible* Substance; he could neither descend from Heaven, nor suffer for Mankind: And yet both these doctrines are so plainly revealed in Scripture; that nothing can be plainer: and therefore the *Homoöusians*, not daring to deny them in plain and direct words, were obliged to do it indirectly; and in obscure terms. And it will require some pains to follow them through all the sophistry which they have used upon this occasion.

To account for the Sufferings of *Christ*, consistently with his *Impassibility*, they tell us; that it was not that Substance, which was in the beginning with God, that felt the pains of the Cross; but another Spirit or Soul, which animated the same Body, and was joined to the *Logos* by a *hypostatic* union; and therefore was the same Person. But this is impossible to be true; because the one was in the beginning with God, and the other was created 4000 years after the World began: and if it can be said, that he who was in the beginning with God, is the same person with him who was not in the beginning with God; there is no sense in Words. It will therefore be sufficient to answer; that, if it was the *Soul* alone that *felt* the Pain, it was the *Soul* alone that *suffered*; and not the Second Person in the Trinity, but a mere Man; which is *Socinianism*.—We shall see presently,

presently, by what Sophistry they endeavoured to evade the force of this argument; telling us that though he did not suffer in his *Substance*, yet he suffered in his *Person*: which shall be considered in its place.

As to the second difficulty, (viz. how the Son of God could descend from Heaven, if he was the *infinite* and *indivisible* Substance of the Father;) the *Homöousians* have not been able to give any consistent answer at all; sometimes they deny the possibility of it, and sometimes assert it (*n*): and sometimes they tell us, that Christ descended from Heaven only in Energy; as Bishop *Bull* speaks: and that he emptied himself of his glory in APPEARANCE; as Dr. *Waterland* expresses it (*o*). But this notion, as it is a direct contradiction to the whole Gospel History; is no less so, to the doctrine of the *Hypostatic Union*: for, if Christ did not *actually* and *personally* descend from Heaven, to animate the Body of the *Messiah*; there could be no such Union formed between the *Logos* and the human Soul, as that Hypothesis requires, and supposes. And, if he did descend *actually* and *personally*; he could not be the *infinite Substance* of the Father.

Bishop *Pearson*, another Writer generally looked-upon to be Orthodox, boldly asserts;

(*n*) Let I. p. 210. (o) *Waterland's* Defence, p. 17.
—Reply to it, p. 59.

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that

that *Christ* could not suffer any thing, except in *Body* or *Soul* (p); and by the word *Soul*, he means a Spirit which never existed before the Conception of the Virgin *Mary*: but this is directly asserting; that the *Logos* or *Word*, which was in the beginning with God, did not suffer at all: for that *Word* or Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, most certainly was neither that *Soul* nor *Body*. According to this notion therefore, no other *Being* suffered; but a Man, *ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος* which is *Socinianism*.

On the other hand, the Bishop finds himself in danger of falling into the Heresy of the *Patripassians*; and warns us against it: but *too late*, to be of any service to us. “We must “take heed,” says his Lordship, “lest we conceive; that, because the *divine* nature belongeth to the Father, *to which* the human nature “is joined; therefore the Father should be *incarnate*, or *conceived*, or *born* (p).” This caution, I say, comes too late; *after* admitting, that the human nature or substance is joined to the nature or substance which belongeth to the Father: for if the divine substance is *inseparable* in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; it follows unavoidably; that, when the substance of the *Son* was *incarnate*; the *Father* and the *Holy Ghost* must also have been *incarnate*: and all the care

(p) See *Pearson* on the Creed, p. 158, 163, 387.

in the World afterwards is too late to prevent the Consequence.

The Bishop himself owns, *as to the substance of Christ*; that, if the divine nature, by which he means the substance of the Father, had been the subject of *Christ's* passion; then must the Father and Spirit have suffered: and from thence he concludes, that the substance or Essence of the Son could *not* suffer; because then the Father and Holy Spirit must have suffered: And it must be owned; that, if the Son be of the same substance with the Father and the Holy Ghost; this must have been the Consequence. And from thence it is natural to conclude; that if *Christ alone* did suffer, the Substance of the Father and Holy Ghost was not the subject of his passion: but some other substance, which was capable of suffering, as well as different and distinct from the substance of the Father and Holy Ghost.

2dly. The Bishop agrees in this consequence; and urges, that the Substance which suffered was the human nature *only*. But this could not be: because the human nature *only* was not the Word of God, who was in the beginning with God; but a mere Man, or human Soul. As certainly therefore as the Son or Word of God was crucified, and the Son *alone*; as certainly as the Son was incarnate, and the Son *alone*; so certainly the sufferings of Christ were neither

the sufferings of the Father's substance, nor the sufferings of a mere Man.

3dly. If it was neither the substance of the Soul, or human nature *only*, that suffered: nor the substance of the Supreme God, which is impassible: the subject of his passion must be his *own divine substance*, different and distinct from both; the very *same* substance, that existed in the beginning with God; and *descended* from Heaven to become incarnate; which the substance of the Father was *incapable* of doing; and the human Soul *did not* do.

To get clear of this consequence, another Sophism is invented: The Bishop says; “Al-
“ though the *human* nature [or substance] was
“ conjoined with the *divine*, which is common to
“ the Father and the Son; yet was the Union
“ made only in the *Person* of the Son, and not
“ in his *Substance*.” But this is only asserting a thing in one breath, and denying it the next. For if the human nature or substance was joined to the divine nature or substance; and this divine nature or substance is common to the Father and the Son, *inseparably* and *indivisibly*; it follows, unavoidably; nay, it is asserting the very same thing in other Words to say, that the human nature or substance is joined to the Father; as well as to the Son: both of them being supposed in the proposition to be *one* and the *same* indivisible nature or substance.

But

But the Bishop; in order to maintain at the same time, that the Son of God *did* suffer and *did not* suffer; or, in other Words, that the *Person* of the Son did suffer, and his *Substance* did not; tells us, that the Union between the human nature or substance, and the divine nature or substance, which is common to the Father and the Son, was made only in the *Person* of the Son; which is quite as unintelligible, as Transubstantiation: for how two substances or natures can be joined together; not in *Substance*, but merely in the *Person* of *one* of the Substances; is all *Ægyptian* darkness, and a mere medley of Words without Ideas; which only serves to obscure the Subject it endeavours to explain: viz. that the Word of God suffered in his *Person*, and not in his *Substance*.

But how is this assertion consistent with what the Bishop said before; that Christ could not suffer, except in Body or Soul? for neither the *human Body*, nor the *human Soul*, nor *both* together, could be the *Person* of the *Logos*; who was in the beginning with God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Lord from Heaven. It might also be urged; that it is not so much as probable, that there was any such Union; any such Soul; or that the *Body* of the *Messiah* was animated by any other *Spirit*, besides the *Logos*(*q*). But be that as it may, and let the

(*q*) Letter I. p. 100, &c.

Union between the *Logos* and the human Soul be ever so intimate; the *human Soul* can never become the *Second Person* of the Trinity, by such Union; nor can the sufferings of the one Person, who is *passible*, by any possibility in the nature of things, actually become the sufferings of the other, who is supposed to be *impassible*: but, as their *Persons* will be different and distinct, so will their *Feelings*.

But farther; the *Greek Fathers* of the second and third ages make no mention of the *Essence* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; as being *distinct* from their *Persons*: (for a *Person* is only an intelligent *Substance*;) nor does the New Testament know any such language, or give the least intimation of any thing done or suffered by a *Person*, distinct from the *Substance*. And besides, such a notion is not only inconceivable; but absolutely contradictory to the *Athanasian System*. For the three Persons in the Trinity are declared by *Athanasius* to be *ἐνυπόστατοι*, substantial; and so says *Petavius*, and Bishop *Bull*; and consequently, if either of them suffers, it must be in their *Substances*; their *Persons* abstracted from their *Essences* being non-entities, and incapable of suffering. So that when it is said, that the *Person* of Christ suffered in the *human nature* or *substance*; there can be no other meaning to the words than this; that the human nature or substance suffered or felt pain, and

and consequently, if *Christ* did not suffer or feel pain in his divine nature or substance; he who was in the beginning with God, did not suffer at all: but a mere Man. In short, the *Person* of *Christ*, as Bishop *Bull* observes, cannot be conceived; without his *Essence*: unless “you
 “define the word *Person* in divinity to mean
 “nothing else than a mere mode of Existence,
 “*τροπὸν τῆς ὑπάρξεως*” which is plainly *Sabellian-*
 “*ism*(*r*).” And so; as Bishop *Pearson*’s first assertion ended in *Socinianism*, this ends in *Sabellianism*.

But, to come directly to the point, as it is revealed in Scripture: we find that *Jesus Christ*, who had been in the form of God, (or in *Shechinah*) made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Man; and being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death; even the death of the Cross: wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that in the name of *Jesus* every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that *Jesus Christ* is *Lord*; to the Glory of God the Father(*s*).

(*r*) *Bulli* Op. p. 255.
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(*s*) *Phil.* ii. 7.—See page

Here we find no kind of intimation, that the descent of Christ from Heaven was only in Energy; nor that he emptied himself of his glory only in APPEARANCE; nor that it was a *human Soul*, which was joined to the *Logos*, that felt all the pain; nor that it was his *Person*, abstracted from his *Essence*, that suffered for Mankind: but it appears to be the *same Jesus*, who had been in the *Form of God*; that humbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the Cross: and all this was done, to the end, that every tongue should confess, that *Jesus Christ* is *Lord*; to the glory of God the Father.—But no Evidence can be sufficient, to overcome an inveterate Hypothesis: and so all this doctrine is to be evaded, under the authority of the Council of *Nice*; which declares, that the *Logos* is *homöousios* with the Father; and consequently impassible. To which it will be proper, and I hope sufficient, to answer, from the Texts of Scripture already quoted; as follows—

1. If the same *Jesus*. who was in the form of God; could and did divest himself of his Glory, and take upon him the form of a Servant; he could not be of the same *Substance* with the Father; and consequently might suffer pain: and therefore the notion of his Impassibility must be false; and the introduction of another Spirit, who should feel all the pain: and the supposition, that the sufferings of *Christ* were only in his

his *Person*, and not in his *Substance*; (which is mere Sophistry) superfluous and unnecessary.

2. It was foretold of *Christ*, that he should *suffer*; and by the word *Christ* was mean'd the Lord from Heaven: but if the pains were only felt by a human Soul, how was this the sufferings of *Christ*? or the Lord from Heaven?

3. The Glory of God consisted in his great Love to the World, in giving-up his *Son* to suffer for Mankind; and by his *Son* is mean'd his *Word*: but how does this great Love appear? or how does all that is here said, tend to the Glory of God the Father; if the Sufferings were only felt by a human Soul, and not by his *Word*?

4. If it was not the *Christ* himself, who had been in the form of God, that performed all the things enumerated in these texts; they never were performed at all: and consequently, Christ was not exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, in reward of obedience: for it is absurd to suppose him rewarded for sufferings which he never felt; and a humiliation, which he never underwent. Nor was it the Lord that bought us: and, as no other Spirit was capable of buying us, but he who paid the price both by his humiliation and sufferings; we are unbought and unredeemed.

5. As no other being ever received the power to raise the dead; but that *Word* of God, who

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came

came down from Heaven : and He received this power, in reward of his humiliation and sufferings ; because he was the Son of Man : If it was not the same being, who suffered, and died, and rose again ; *our* hopes of a Resurrection are vain. For, whatever other Spirit or Soul is supposed to be united to the *Logos*, and to have suffered and risen again ; *our* Resurrection is no more connected with *his* death and sufferings, than with the death and sufferings of any *other* mere Man. Will any Christian dare to assert ; that the Atonement was made by a Person, who never existed till 4000 years after the Creation ?

Bishop *Pearson* was sensible of this absurdity ; and expresses himself very strongly upon it. He says ; when *Christ* fasted, there was no other Person hungry ; but *that Son of God that made the World*—when He sat down *weary* by the well, there was no other Person felt that thirst ; but he that was eternally begotten of the Father, the Fountain of the Deity(*t*). When He was buffeted and scourged, there was no other Person sensible of those pains ; but that *eternal Word*, who before all worlds was *impassible* : when He

(*t*) In the 96th page of the 1st. Letter, *Ben Mordecai* has, by mistake, quoted these words, *the fountain of the Deity*, as mean'd of *Christ* ; whereas they relate to the Father, and are in apposition with the word Father : and accordingly are appropriated to the Father by Bishop *Pearson*, p. 37, 38.

was crucified and died, there was no other Person gave-up the Ghost; but the Son of him, and so of the same Nature with Him, that only hath Immortality(*u*).—Who can read this, and not believe; that the Person, who felt these pains, was the very same identical Being that was in the beginning with God? which is the true Scripture Doctrine. But the Bishop means no such thing: He has a sophistical meaning to the word *Person*; he supposes the Son of God, who was in the beginning with God, to be the same Person with another Spirit; who had no existence, till the year of the world 4,000: And accordingly he says, the *Word* was not subject to the suffering of the Flesh it took; and that *Christ* could not suffer, except in Body or Soul; which manifestly excludes the sufferings of the Son of God, or the *Logos*. Thus his Lordship, though in full possession of Truth, gives it all up; for the sake of maintaining the Son's *impassibility*, with which his *Suffering*, in any manner whatsoever, is absolutely inconsistent.—Nay, even suppose it possible for a Being to suffer in *Person*, and not in *Substance*; and that the *Body* of the *Messiah* was animated by two different *Spirits*; yet this would not solve the difficulty: for it is impossible these two *Spirits* should be the same identical *Person*. The Orthodox Notion allows two *Natures* or *Substances*

(*u*) Pearson, 186.

in *Christ*, by the Council of *Chalcedon*; which is one of the Tests of Orthodoxy in *England*. Now if both these *Natures* were conscious; the one must be conscious of its *Impassibility*, and the other of its *Passibility*: and consequently, they must be different *Persons*; and the hunger, or thirst, or pain of the *passible* Person, could not possibly be the hunger, or thirst, or pain felt by the *impassible* one.

But the Bishop carries the Argument against himself still farther: for he says; no other *Person* was sensible of the pain, but the *eternal Word*: &c. Now, if this was the Case; *the Soul*, which is supposed to be joined to the *eternal Word*, did not suffer; for that Soul was not the *eternal Word*: (notwithstanding the confusion that is made by using the word *Person* in different Senses; sometimes as the *Logos*, sometimes as a human Soul joined to the *Logos*, and sometimes for the whole Body compounded by both: and consequently, the *Word* of God did not suffer at all; (according to this doctrine) either in Body or Soul.

The next Argument the Bishop uses to prove the *personal* sufferings of a Being, whom he declares to be substantially or essentially *impassible*; is of a very extraordinary nature: For the force of it lies entirely in raising our opinion of his *Essence*, at the expence of his *Person*.

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The Bishop says, we must not think so *meanly* of the Essence of the Son; as to imagine it subject to the sufferings of the Flesh it took(x).— This, as I observed, is in the same style with the objection of the ancients; that it was below the dignity of *Christ* to weep. But where do the Christians learn to make this unscriptural distinction? or what can they mean, by allowing of shame and disgrace, with regard to the *Person* of *Christ*; and denying it, as to his *Essence*? The Apostle speaks in a very different manner; and tells us, that he was conscious of the shame; and despised it: he endured the Cross, despising the shame; and is set down at the right hand of God(y). Will the Christians tell us, that the *divine Substance* of Christ did not endure the Cross; and that it was the *human Nature* only, that was *crucified*? If so, how does this differ from the Heresy of *Cerintus*? and yet this is the doctrine of *Cyril* and the *Councils*.

The giving-up this article of Faith, upon which all our assurance of Redemption and hope of Immortality, as Christians, is built; appears to be the greatest Infatuation, that can be well conceived; (though it runs through all the sects of the *Homöousians*;) the true doctrine being so plain, and so frequently repeated in the New Testament; without one

(x) P. 187.

(y) Heb. xii. 21.

hint of his suffering, yet not feeling pain, or any other than the plain and literal meaning of the words; that it was the same Being, who was in the beginning with God, that suffered pain and death; and on the other hand, the metaphysical objections authorised by the Council of *Nice*, are utterly unintelligible and inconceivable.

Now all these difficulties and inconsistencies arise merely from the Change that was made in the Faith, by introducing the notion that the *Word* of God was *infinite* and *impassible*(*z*); for, if this be true, the whole history of the descent of *Christ* from Heaven, and of all that he performed on Earth from his birth to his crucifixion, must be false(*a*): as many of the most learned and orthodox of the Christians have confessed(*b*). But however, it is upon the authority of this Hypothesis, that the Council of *Chalcedon*, which is one of the Tests of Orthodoxy in *England*, hath ventured to anathematise all such, as believe the plain and obvious sense of the Apostles Creed: *viz.* “that it was the Son of God, who suffered “under *Pontius Pilate*: expelling all those “from the Convention of sacred Persons, who “audaciously asserted the Deity [*i. e.* the “Substance] of the only begotten who came “down from Heaven, to be *passible*(*b*).” And

(*z*) Let. I. p. 96, 203.

(*a*) Let. III. Postsc.

(*b*) *Evag.* lib. II. c. iv. p. 425.—*Niceph.* lib. XV. c. v.

Cyril, in his letter approved of by the Council, says; “we say, he suffered and rose again; not
 “as if the Word, *as to its own nature*, suffered
 “either stripes, or the transfixing of the nails,
 “or any other wounds; for the Deity is *im-*
 “*passible*, because it is incorporeal: But be-
 “cause the Body, which was properly *His*,
 “suffered; we say, the *Word* itself suffered:
 “for he was *impassible* in a *passible* Body(c).”

And again, he is thus quoted by *Aetius*;
 “Because *his own Body*, as the Apostle *Paul*
 “says, tasted Death for men; the *Word* itself
 “is said to have suffered Death for us. Not
 “that he experienced death, as to his *Nature*;
 “*ἦσαν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴ φύσιν*” for this would be shocking
 “to say: but, as I said, his *Body* tasted
 “Death.”

Upon which I would observe, first; that, if the Text here referred-to in *St. Paul*’s writings be *Heb. xi. 9*, there is not any thing said about the *Body of Christ* tasting Death; but only about *Christ* himself, considered *personally*. “But we
 “see *Jesus*—for the suffering of Death—
 “crowned—that *He* by the grace of God
 “should taste Death for every man.”

Secondly, the Reason here given by *Cyril*, why the Deity of *Christ* is *impassible*, overturns the doctrine of the *Hypostatic* Union; for, if

(c) *Evag.* chap. xviii. p. 442.—*Niceph.* Lib. XV. c. xxx. p. 647.

the Deity is *impassible*, because it is *incorporeal*; the human Soul must be *impassible*, for the same Reason: (except *Cyril* argues as a materialist; and supposes the human Soul to be corporeal in that sense:) and consequently, the human Soul, as it is called, could not suffer; any more than the Deity.

Epiphanius censures the opinion of the *Apollinarists*, in the same way as *Cyril*; and says, They boldly declared, that the *Divinity* of *Christ* suffered(*d*). But if what *Epiphanius* has advanced a few pages before, is true(*e*); that God descended from Heaven; why might he not *suffer*? The *same Divinity* (understand it in what sense you please), which is capable of *local motion*; must be also capable of *suffering*: The Supreme God is capable of neither. And the *Apollinarists* think, they have the Scripture in proof of their opinion; that the *Divinity* of *Christ*, i. e. the *Word* or Son of God, suffered: and quote I Cor. i. 8. “If they had known, “they would not have crucified the Lord of “Glory.” To which *Epiphanius* answers; that the *Divinity* was present, when *Christ* suffered in the *Flesh*; that we might have Justification not only in the *Flesh*, but in the *Divinity*: but the *Godhead* suffered not; (ἐκὰς αὐτὸν παθόν) because *immutable*, and *impassible*, and *consubstantial* with the Father. And he

(*d*) *Epiph.* Tom. II. p. 1026.

(*e*) *Ibid.* p. 1023.
illustrates

illustrates his meaning by this instance: If our Garment is spotted with Blood, we say, the *Man* who wears it is spotted; though the spots do not reach the man's *Body*: So though the suffering does not reach the *Divinity*, but only the *human* Nature; [and no other *suffered*, but a Man;] yet we do not *attribute* the *Sufferings* to *that alone*, but to the *Divinity* also; [though we know it to be false.] Nor do we incur the curse in Scripture; Cursed is every one, that putteth his trust in *Man*; [i. e. the *sufferings* of the *human* Nature:] because the *suffering* is *imputed* to his *Divinity*, though the *Divinity* suffered not *in itself*: and the Salvation, which was gained by the passion of *Christ*, he says, is *attributed* by the holy Church of God to the *Divinity* also(*f*); [which they declare to be *incapable* of *suffering*.] Which amounts to this—that the Church *imputes* and *attributes* the *Sufferings* of *Christ* to the *Divinity*; though they know it to be false and impossible. This sophistry has been already remarked and exposed, in the first letter(*g*). I shall only observe at present;

1st. That the way of speaking is absolutely contradictory to itself. The *Divinity* did suffer; or it did not. If the *sufferings* of *Christ* are *justly* and *truly* imputed and attributed to the *Divinity* by the Catholic Church, and not

(*f*) *Ibid.* 1027.

(*g*) P. 124, &c.

only in words; then the Catholic Church agrees with the *Apollinarists* in the very doctrine, for which it condemns them.

2. But if the Church does not *justly* and *truly* impute and attribute the *sufferings* of *Christ* to his *Divinity*; as well in *Fact*, as in *Words*: then it believes the sufferings of the Lord of Glory, the Word of God, the second Person of the Trinity, no more than the *Mahometans* do. For if in *Christ* there are two *Natures*, the divine and human; each of which, considered distinct from the other, has all the *Essentials* of a *Person*: then in *Christ* there are two *Persons*; the one of which suffered, and the other did not: And the Person that suffered was not the Lord of Glory, or the Word of God, or the second Person in the Trinity; but a *mere Man*. The only difference is this; that the orthodox Christians believe, the sufferings to have been felt or undergone by *another* Person, *different* from the *Logos*, who at that time animated the same Body: And the *Mahometans* believe, they were felt or undergone by *another Person*; who did *not* animate the same Body: but neither of them believe, they were undergone by the *Word*; who was in the beginning with God.

3. If it was so shocking to believe, that the *Word* of God experienced Death; as *Cyril* represents it, agreeably to the doctrine of the
Coun-

Councils, and in direct contradiction to *Scripture*: how must the Faith have been changed from what it was in the more primitive ages; as explained by *Irenæus* and *Justin Martyr*! The latter of whom declares, entirely inconsistently with all this new-invented Hypothesis, that the Son of God sweat, as it were, great drops of blood; when his heart trembled, and his bones in like manner, &c. that we might know it to be the *Father's* will, that his *Son* should truly upon our account undergo such great *suffering*; and we should not say, [what the Fathers and the Councils of later ages *do* say; and it is Heresy now to deny:] that, because he was the Son of God, He did not feel these things which befel him^(b).—*Lond. Edit.* p. 361, 362. See Let. I. Note XXV.

Having now shewn, that the *homöousian* Doctrine, a doctrine, which St. *Jerom* owns was unknown to the Apostles; is contrary both to the Scripture itself, and to the sense of it as understood by the most primitive Fathers; who believed the Son of God to have been *passible*: there remains no other Authority for it, but the arbitrary decrees of the *homöousian Councils*. And if so, it will be no difficult matter to support the cause of Christianity, *thus wounded in the house of its friends*; merely by inverting the argument: and whereas the *homöousians*

(b) P. 57.

assume, (without any authority from Scripture) that *Christ* is of the *same Substance* with the Father; which Substance is *impassible, infinite, &c.* and therefore could not suffer, nor descend from Heaven: I would on the contrary assume; that *Christ did* descend from Heaven, and *suffer*: and consequently, according to their own Principles, was *not* of the same Substance with the Father; which is *infinite* and *impassible*. And I would prove *my* assumption, that *Christ* did actually descend from Heaven and suffer, from plain texts of Scripture; whereas the *homöousians* have no proof of their assumption; viz. that the Son is of the *same Substance* with the Father; but their own arbitrary addition of the word *Substance* to the texts of Scripture which declare, that *Christ* is *of* or *from* God; and the decrees, that are founded upon that addition.

CHAPTER III.

The necessity of examining the different Senses, in which the Homöousian doctrine is explained; and shewing them all to be indefensible.

HAVING proved in the last Chapter, that the *homöousian* doctrine, upon which the whole proof of the Fecundity of the Father and the Generation of the Son from the paternal Sub-

Substance, is founded; is inconsistent with the most plain and fundamental doctrines of Christianity: it will be necessary, in order to confirm and corroborate what has been there said, to examine that doctrine to the bottom; and prove it to be false, in every Sense, in which it has been explained. And this will be the more necessary, as we shall frequently be obliged to quote the writings of the ancient Fathers upon the Subject; who make no scruple to support that doctrine by any arguments they can find; whether consistent or inconsistent, whether true or false.

Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, Apollinaris, says *Jerom*, have written much against *Celsus* and *Porphyry*: consider, what arguments and doubtful problems they use, to overthrow the writings composed by the Spirit of the Devil; and because they are constrained to say, not what they think, but what the dispute requires; they confute the Gentiles(*a*). And in another place he speaks in generals, “*Ecclesiastici viri non*
“*dogmatum custodiunt veritatem; sed de corde*
“*suo confingunt, magistrumque habent pre-*
“*sumptionem suam*(*b*).” From this false zeal proceeds that fallacious method of arguing upon the subject of the Trinity, which is taken notice of in the first Letter(*c*); a method,

(*a*) Bib. Univer. & Hist. Vol. x. p. 492.
on *Ezek.* 34.

(*c*) Let. I. p. 73.

(*b*) *Jerom*

which

which no honest man would use; if he considered what he was about. For it is impossible that any man should believe all the opposite explanations of the Trinity by the *Sabellians*, *Polytheists*, and *Athanasians*, at the same time: and no man can have a right to answer the Objections, which are brought against his own System, upon the Principles of others, which he disbelieves.—To argue in this double manner upon contradictory Principles, is as absurd, as it would be to conclude, that the *horizontal* Moon appears larger, than when it is in the *meridian*; because it is nearer: and of a deeper colour, because it is farther off. Or, to mention an instance in fact, it is like *Bellarmino's* preferring the Council of *Carthage* to that of *Laodicea*, because it is later; and the Council of *Nice* to that of *Frankfort*, because it is elder(*d*).—But no man would think of reasoning thus, if he was sincere in his researches; and did not rather aim at Victory than Truth.

But, to return to the Subject——In this dispute between the *Athanasians* and the *Arians*, it is observed by Bishop *Bull*; (and the observation is very extraordinary;) that the *Arians*, who above all others opposed the *homöousian* doctrine: would have agreed to any Catholic confession of Faith, either from Scripture or Tradition; which had not the word *Homöousios*

(*d*) *Taylor's Lib. of Proph.* fol. 473.

in it: even though other words had been used, which among men of judgement signified the same thing(e). But this would not satisfy the *Athanasians*: and *Ambrose* says, the *Arians* would have used that word; if they could any way have perverted it: which they found impracticable; and therefore they never used it. And Bishop *Bull* says, “In raising up this furious
 “heat in their breasts upon account of this word
 “*Homöoufion*, these mad Men [the *Arians*] seem
 “to have acted like mad Dogs; who snarl at
 “their Chains, and endeavour in vain to bite
 “them with their teeth.”—Is not this a strange story, that the *Arians* should take an antipathy to a mere *Word*; and that this Word, though *unexplained*, should chain them up so much tighter than any *other* words could do? and that the *Arians* should be willing to subscribe to the *Sense* of the word: and object to the *Word itself*, and snarl at it?—

On the other hand we may ask; what right had the *Athanasians* to chain up their fellow Christians to the use of a word, not used in Scripture; nor so much as defined or explained by themselves?

(e) Quippe egregii illi simulandi, dissimulandique artifices nullam plane loquendi formulam, quam sive ex Scripturis, sive ex Traditione desumptam usurparant Catholici, repudiarunt; præter hoc unam *Homöoufii* vocabulum. *Bulli Op.* 34. 285.

Perhaps

Perhaps it was this very chaining them up, that raised such a furious heat in their breasts; and made them *mad*, and *snarl*, and *bite*: for nobody can be expected to submit patiently to be chained up; when he knows, that he has a right to his Liberty. But admitting that the *Athanasians* had a right to chain up the *Arians*: yet what could they mean, by refusing to *explain* the word, to which they required a Subscription? or why were they not content with the *Arians'* subscribing to the *Sense* of it? Is not this whole account very mysterious and suspicious? And does it not look, as if the *Athanasians* were conscious, that the *Arian* Faith, in this particular was not contrary either to Scripture or Antiquity?

But in truth, the whole Story is mere Fallacy and Imposition; the words of *Arius*, in his Epistle to Bishop *Alexander*, are plainly directed, not against the *Word*; as if there was any *Charm* in it: but against the *Sense* of it. “If, “ says *Arius*, we understand the expressions, *I* “ *came forth, or I come from the bowels of* “ *the Father*, as a part of the *homöousion*, or “ an emission or production, as some do; “ the Father must be compounded, divisible “ and mutable(*f*).”—That the *Arians* had an aversion to the word *homöousios*, is true; but this was not like the Hydrophoby in mad dogs

(*f*) See Appendix, No. I.

• which

which is not to be accounted for; and *Socrates* has given us the reason of their dislike: it was because they look'd upon those who approved of the word, as favouring the opinions of *Sabellius* and *Montanus*; and therefore they called them Blasphemers, as being persons who destroy'd the existence of the Son (g): and that this was the reason why *Eustatbius* was deposed, is asserted by St. *George*, the patron Saint of *England*; in his encomium upon *Eusebius Emisenus*(h).—The fact seems to be this; the *Athanasians* saw, that there were two large parties of the Christians, who would vote with them, if the word *homöousios* was kept to; and would immediately desert them, as soon as it should be explained in the *Athanasian* sense of it.—One of these Parties was the *Sabellians*, the followers of *Paulus Samosatenus*; for we find, by the account which is given us by *Socrates*, concerning the disputes between the Bishops after the Council of *Nice*; that those who were for the word *Homöousios* were censured as *Sabellians*: and both *Athanasius* and *Hilary* own, that the word was used by *Paulus Samosatenus* in a *Sabellian* sense(i).

(g) *Soc. Lib. I. ch. xxiii.* This dispute, we are told by *Nicephorus*, was carried on like a battle in the dark: for they did not so much as understand one another upon those subjects, upon which they accused one another of Blasphemy. *Nic. Lib. VIII. c. 45.* (h) *Ibid. c. xxiv.*

(i) *Sandius Enuc. Hist. p. 192.—Athanas. & Hilary de Synodis.*

It is therefore indisputable, that the *Sabellians* could subscribe to the word *homöousios*; though not to the *Athanasian* sense of it. And all those, who believed with *Gregory Nyssen*, &c. that the three Persons of the Trinity existed separately; and yet were One God, because they were all of the same generical Substance; and interpreted the word, in that sense; could have no objection to it. And besides these, all such as believed that Angels and the Souls of Men were consubstantial with God; as the *Platonists*, who believed they were formed out of the eternal *Psyche*; and the followers of *Pythagoras*; would form another Party, as well as the *Stoics*, in favour of the same word(k). And all these, as long as the word *homöousios* continued unexplained, were a great majority against the *Arians*. So very contrary is the true state of the case from what Bishop *Bull* has represented it to be, in his story of the mad Dogs. For he tells us, that the word *homöousios* was so determinate; as to exclude all ambiguity(l): whereas it was nothing but the ambiguity of the word, which occasioned it being insisted upon; rather than the sense and meaning of it. For as soon as it was explained we find,

(k) See back, chap. II, Note (b). (l) Quippe cujus vocis (*Homöousion*) ἀρετή et exquisita ratio omnem ἀμφιβολίαν aditum ipsis [*Arianis*] præcluderent. *Bulli* op. 34.

1st, That what the *Sabellians* meant, was one numerical Substance to the three Persons.

2. What *Cyril*, *Gregory Nyssen*, &c. meant, was three Substances of the same kind, separately existing; as *Peter*, *James*, and *John*.

3. What the *Athanasians* meant, was three Substances of the same kind, joined together by an *Emperichoresis*(*m*).

Now of all these different Sects, there is but one that maintains both the Unity and the Trinity at the same time; and that is the *Athanasian*. The doctrine of *Sabellius* admits of no *real* and *personal*, but only a *nominal* Trinity; for it only supposes one Substance to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost(*n*): and accordingly, the *Sabellians* allow of no generation from the paternal Substance. But this Sect of Christians must be greatly erroneous; because their Hypothesis is entangled with such consequences as these: viz. that the Father's begetting a Son was nothing but one [character] name, notion, or mode of the Deity; begetting another name, notion, or mode of the Deity; or the same Deity under one notion begetting itself under another notion(*o*). In short, it must follow, according to the *Sabellian* System; that it was only a name or notion or character, and not any real substantial

(*m*) Let. I. p. 60, &c.

(*n*) Let. I. p. 26.

(*o*) *Cudworth*, 605.

Being or Substance, that suffered for Mankind—But this, as *Athanasius* observes, is only a Trinity of Names and Words; whereas the Trinity is a Trinity of Substances or Hypostases really subsisting(*p*). And again *Athanasius* observes, that this notion destroys the Essence of the Son; and therefore he calls these Christians *Tautöousians*, and *Monöousians*(*q*).

On the other hand, the *Pseudo-athanasians* declare with *Cyril*, *Gregory Nyssen*(*r*), &c. that each of the three Persons of the Trinity is God himself; and consequently, each of them must be a distinct and separate Substance, self-existent, and unoriginate: which is *Polytheism*. Bishop *Bull* says, “neque in sacra Triade altera
“Persona ab altera separari possunt; sicut tres
“humanæ Personæ aut alterius alicujus speciei
“supposita ab invicem determinantur: qui
“enim hoc modo tres divinitatis Hypostases
“existimant, merito *Tritheistæ* appellantur.” And *Athanasius* says, we do not acknowledge three Hypostases divided or separate; as is to be seen corporally in men: that we may not comply with the heathen *Polytheism*. These therefore admit of no Unity. So that both a Unity and Trinity are only preserved by the *Athanasians*; and they preserve it merely by the

(*p*) *Ibid.* 612.—Let. I. 67.

(*q*) Let. I. p. 166.

(*r*) Let. I. p. 62.

Emperichoresis, which joins the three Substances together.—For the *Athanasian* Faith, as it was settled at the Council of *Nice*; which is one of the first four general Councils established by the Laws of *England* as the Standards of Orthodoxy; is thus, according to *Athanasius*; that there are three distinct Substances to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which constitutes the *Trinity*: And these three are joined together by an *Emperichoresis*; which constitutes the *Unity*. So that the *Unity* of God is entirely dependent on the *Emperichoresis*; which ties the three Substances together. And accordingly *Basil*, *Ambrose*, *Jerom*, &c. imagined that they found this Mystery in the words of *Eccles. iv. 12.* a *Threefold Cord* is not quickly broken. And Bishop *Bull*, who was a real *Athanasian*, calls this *Emperichoresis* a Mystery above all Mysteries. But the pretended *Athanasians* of the present age seem wholly to have discarded it: they content themselves with the name of *Athanasians*; but not a man of them has step'd forth in defence of this important Doctrine; though it is this Doctrine alone, that prevents the *Athanasians* from being *Polytheists*; as *Athanasius* himself plainly declares, in the words just quoted: whereas the present *Athanasians* maintain a mere jumble of *Socinian*, *Sabellian*, and *Pseudo-Athanasian* doctrines all together; which is as different from the genuine Principles of
Athana-

Atbanafius and the *Nicene* Fathers, as it is from *Arianism*.

Now this *Emperichorefis* or *Circuminceffion* is explained by *Genebrand*, according to Bishop *Bull*, as follows; “It is that, by which one thing
“exists in another; not only by participation
“of nature, but also by full and intimate pre-
“fence. This kind of inexistence, as I may fay,
“we call *Circuminceffion*; because by that, some
“things, though ever fo distinguished from each
“other without separation, are in one another
“without confufion: and do, *as it were*, pene-
“trate and enter one another(*r*).” *Bellarmino* defines it to be “the intimate and perfect resi-
“dence or inhabitation of one thing in ano-
“ther(*s*).” And agreeably to this *Cyri*l fays, the Father is the natural place of the Son(*t*): and *Damas*cen fays, “there is no local diftance in
“the uncircumfcribed Deity, as in Us; fo that
“they are in one another, not fo as to be con-
“founded together; but to adhere.” *Bafil* fupposes it to be “a kind of feparate conjunc-
“tion:” and *Hilary* fupposes it not to be “a
“coherence, but exiftence by a unity of infe-
“parable nature(*t*).” Another explanation of it the Bishop gives us in the words of St. *Am-
brofe*; which is well worth the reading, if it

(*r*) *Geneb.* Lib. II.—*Bulli* op. 285. (*s*) *Ibid.* 288.

(*tt*) *Ibid.* 289.

were only to see what strange things learned men will admire.

“ Principii Unitatem & Perichoresin brevi &
 “ arguta oratione sic amplectitur *Ambrosius*(u),
 “ in libro de dignitate conditionis humanæ—

“ Ideo autem dicitur Deus Pater, quia ipse
 “ est ex quo ; & sapientia est, qua ordinantur
 “ omnia ; & dilectio, qua se volunt omnia ita
 “ manere ut ordinata sunt. Ex quo ergo, &
 “ qui ex eo, & quo se diligunt ipsa duo, tria
 “ sunt ; & illa tria ideo unum, quia sic sunt ex
 “ uno illa duo, ut tamen ob eo non sint sepa-
 “ rata : sed ex ipso sunt, quia non a se ; & in
 “ ipso, quia non separata ; & ipsum ipsa quod
 “ ipse, & ipsum ipse quod ipsa : & non ipsum
 “ ipsa qui ipse ; & non ipsa ipse quæ ipsa.”—

And *Damascen* says ; “ though every one of the
 “ three Persons subsists of itself, or is a *perfect*
 “ *Substance* ; and has its own Property, or *dis-*
 “ *ferent manner* of Existence ; yet they are uni-
 “ ted in Essence and natural Property : and in
 “ that they are not separated nor recede from
 “ the Father’s Substance, they are and are cal-
 “ led one God(x).” And Bishop *Bull* and *Pe-*
tavius say the same. And Dr. *Waterland* says,
 the Substance of the one Person is not the Sub-
 stance of the others ; but different, however of
 the same kind, or united to them(y).

(u) Cap. ii.—*Bulli* op. 289.—Def. *fid. Nic.* c. iv. sect.
 13. (x) *Ibid.* 288. (y) *Let.* I. p. 61.

But Dr. *Whitby* takes this whole doctrine to be a mere invention, in order to support the *homöousian* Hypothesis; and asks, where hath the Scripture spoken of this wonderful *Emperichoresis* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which the *Post-nicenes* speak of with such Confidence and Assurance (z)? And, though it could be proved; yet he denies that it would serve the end proposed by it: for that three Essences cannot become one, by being closely joined and connected; but only three Essences, joined and connected (a). And we may argue in the same manner upon what *Tertullian* says, when he describes the Trinity to be “una Substantia in tribus cohærentibus.” For what does this mean, but three Substances joined together into one; as the Fathers understood the text in *Ecclesiastes*, of a threefold Cord? And so in the second chapter he says, in the Trinity there is *Number* without *Division*; which comes to the same thing: and he explains this farther, when he says; that the three so connected are not *unus*, but *unum* (b).

But the worst Consequence of this doctrine is; that it supplies the Infidel with an argument against the necessary Existence of God. For necessary Existence requires both *Unity* and *Sim-*

(z) *Whitby's* Last Thoughts; p. 29, 30.
p. 6.

(b) *Tertul. adv. Prax.* c. 12.

(a) *Ibid.*

plicity:

plicity: whereas three Persons joined together, *one* of them *unoriginate*, and *two originate*; will answer neither of these requisites. Nor can the whole *Homöoufion* be unoriginate. Besides, as the necessity of a *Perichoresis* can by no means be proved; it may perhaps cease to exist; and the Unity cease with it: so that, though there is but One God, now; there may be Three, some time hence. And in truth, if we believe the Fathers, the *Perichoresis* itself has not been of very long continuance: for the three Substances could not be joined together, before they existed: and they could not exist, till the Generation of the Son: for *Athanasius* tells us, that the Generation of the Son was the origin of his Substance(*c*); and that he existed before his Generation: and if so, he existed before the *Perichoresis* began. How long it was before, he does not say; but the Antenicene Fathers in general agree, that his Generation was but a little before the Creation(*d*). And accordingly, Mr. *Jurieu* observes from their Writings; that the Trinity commenced but a little before the Creation of the World. And the *Perichoresis* could not exist before the Trinity; for they could not be joined together, before they existed.

Now it is certain; that, *before* the generation of the Son, the divine substance was but *one*:

(*c*) *Ibid.* c. 25.

(*d*) *Bulli op.* 232.

Mmmmmm

and

and no *Perichoresis* was wanting, to make the God and Father of the Universe *complete* in himself. But now we are told, that One divine person cannot exist; without the other Two. The Son, says *Athanasius*, is as indivisible from the Father; as the Splendor is from the Light(*e*). And he supposes the three Hypostases or Substances to make-up one Divinity, as the Fountain and Stream make-up one River; in which sense the whole Trinity is said by him to be one Divinity, one Essence, one Nature, and one God(*f*): agreeably to the Doctrine of the *Platonists*, where the three Persons *τὰ γὰρ ὅν, νῦς, and ψυχὴ*, make-up *τὸ θεῖον*. And Dr. *Waterland* argues, that no One person is God; exclusive of the other Two.—As if the *Monarchy* of Heaven had been changed by the *Perichoresis* into an *Aristocracy*: and God the Father was no longer Supreme. But how can these things be? If one of these divine persons cannot *now* exist, *without* the other two; how was it possible for the Father to exist, *before* the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Holy Ghost?—If no one of these persons is God, *exclusive* of the other two; how can it be said, that each of them is *of himself* both God and Lord(*f*)?—If the whole Trinity be but one Nature or Essence;

(*e*) Let. I. Note XIII.—*Whitby* Disq. mod. 177.

(*ff*) *Athan. Creed.*

how can the Son be said to be incarnate, without the Incarnation of the Father and the Holy Ghost?

For these and many other reasons I conclude; that the *Homöousian* doctrine is not to be defended, upon the Principles either of the *Sabellians*, *Polytheists*, or *Athanasians*: and must therefore depend solely upon the Authority of the *Nicene Council*: and therefore it will be proper to examine that Authority, and prove it to be unsatisfactory; before the doctrine itself be totally rejected. But, before I enter upon that subject, I shall go on to consider the Progress of these Disputes; till the present Times.

CHAPTER IV.

The Progress of the Disputes between the Athanasians and Arians; and between the Homöousians themselves, to the present Times.

I Have observed, how the *Athanasians* prevailed over the *Arians* at the Council of *Nice*; by the assistance of the other *homöousian* Sects: who all agreed to the use of the same word; though they understood it very differently, when it came to be explained. It was *Constantine* himself; who, it is said(*a*), inserted the

(*a*) *Theod.* 1, 8, 9.

word *homoousios* into the *Nicene* Creed; and, under his auspices, *Arius* was condemned; and his defence was forbidden to be read, and his book *Thalia*, which he had written about it; and *Arius* with his party, *Euzoius*, *Theon*, &c. were degraded and banished, and his Writings were commanded to be burnt, and concealing of them was threatened with Death(*b*).

Thus the first Severities broke-out among the Christians against one another (*c*): and from this time the Church became engaged in perpetual controversies, persecutions, and murders: and their Councils were carried-on by party rage, vote, and violence. What was heterodox in the days of *Constantine*, was orthodox under *Constantius*; what was orthodox in the East, was heterodox in the West; what was looked upon at one Time to be so fundamental a Truth, that whosoever disbelieved it would without doubt perish everlastingly; at another time was condemned as Heresy and Blasphemy. At several times and places there were not less than nine or ten forms of Confession; differing from one another, and from the *Nicene* Creed, and the whole Church. And their distinctions were so nice and unintelligible; that it was next to impossible for any private Man, or even any Council, to give an account of their Faith; without

(*b*) *Soc. i. 9, &c.*
the Persecutors.

(*c*) *Burnet's* pref. to the Lives of

.q. 8, 1. book 2 (a)

the

the imputation of Heresy. *Arius* was condemned by a Council in the year 322; approved-of, 323; condemned again, 324. *Athanasius* was condemned at *Tyre*, while *Constantine* was alive, in 335; afterwards at *Antioch*, in 341; at *Milan*, 355; at *Arles* and *Constantinople*: and approved-of at *Rome*, *Sardis*, and *Alexandria*: and the principles of them both were condemned at *Sirmium*, 357; where there were above three hundred Bishops of the West; besides those of the East(*d*). “The *Arian* Councils were convened by the same Authority, which all the world knows did at that time convocate Councils; and by which the eight general Councils did meet; that is, by the Emperor all were called; and as many or more did come to them, than came to the most famous Council of *Nice*(*f*).” The Professors of Error, as *Au’stine* says, surpassed the numbers of the Professors of the Truth; as the sands of the Sea do the stars of Heaven(*g*). The Heresy of *Arius*, says the Author of *Nazianzen’s* life, possessed in a manner the whole extent of the world. *Vincentius Lirinensis* says, the poison of *Arianism* had defiled not only a small part but almost all the whole world: “adeo ut prope cunctis Latini
“nominis Episcopis, partim vi, partim fraude,

(*d*) *Ammianus Marcell. Gronov. Note p. 70. Baxter Ch. Hist. 58.*

(*f*) *Taylor’s Lib. of Proph. p. 108.*

(*g*) *Epist. ad Vincent.*

“deceptis,

“deceptis, caligo offunderetur.” Bishops were against Bishops, Councils against Councils, and the whole Church with the Pope himself became *Arian*, and schismatical(*b*). And for many ages the heat and rage of the two parties were so violent, (till the *Arians* were at length overpowered) that Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy seem to have been almost appropriated to the differences upon this one Subject, and its immediate Consequences. All, who defended the Consubstantiality, were considered as Orthodox; and all who opposed it, as Heretics. The very same expressions were counted orthodox in the *Homöousians*, which were judged to be heretical in the *Arians*. And many *Sabellian* and *Polytheistical* expressions, which *Athanasius* would have condemned; became current in the Church, and were excused and suffered; because they were mean’d and designed against the *Arians*. At length these opposite and contradictory Opinions begat opposite and contradictory Creeds; and it was nothing extraordinary to hear such as were esteemed orthodox, because *homöousians*; at one time, arguing upon the principles of *Sabellius*; at another time, upon those of *Gregory Nyssen*, and the *Polytheists*. Thus, when they would prove, that it was the Son only that was born of the Virgin *Mary*; it could not be done

(*b*) Hicks’s Apol. Vind. p. 22, 37.

by the *Nicene* Creed, which taught that the Father and Son were joined together *indivisibly*; as it is understood by *Athanasius*, and other learned men: but by the *Pseudo-athanasian* Creed, which taught that each of the three Persons was of himself God; *i. e.* a separate and distinct Substance: and when they would prove the Unity, it could not be done by the *Pseudo-athanasian* Creed, which supposes each of himself God; but by the *Nicene* Creed, which taught that the three Persons were joined together *indivisibly*. By these means, though they found the advantage of answering the objections to the *homöousian* Scheme, so as to satisfy the common people; by telling them, that the *Christian Verity* taught one thing, and the *Catholic Religion* the direct contrary; and they must believe them both: yet one would think, they could not easily believe their own arguments, nor satisfy their own minds; except they examined things very superficially: for no man can believe contrary Propositions at the same time. On the other hand, they did great disservice to the cause of Religion, in the eyes of judicious men; by establishing Contradictions, and laying themselves open to all the objections that attend the three different Systems separately: (two of which must be false:) as well as exposing themselves to the manifest absurdities and

and inconsistencies, which arise from comparing them together.

And now for many ages the Patriarchs and Bishops were so much more guided by political than religious motives; that they were ready on all occasions to change their opinions, and approve or disapprove of doctrines; as was most agreeable to the Emperors (*i*): and, as the matter was carried at last in favour of the *homöousians*; these have maintained that doctrine ever since with a high hand, and with great art and cunning: not only punishing those who presumed to question it, but discouraging as much as possible all examination into it, either by Reason or Scripture; and representing it as a Mystery, above our reason, and dangerous to be examined into; and the very appealing to the Scripture, instead of the Councils, was looked upon as Heresy and *Arianism*. “The *Scripturarians*, says *Prateolus*, *Satan* led into Error; “as he did formerly the *Arians*; whilst they “admitted only the holy Scripture, rejecting “the learned and holy Interpreters; against “whom the Catholics oppose Tradition(*k*).” But the *Arians* were not any better off, when they received Tradition. For if the ancient Fathers they appealed-to, did not hold the *homöousian* doctrine, their case was not at all

(*i*) See chap. viii.

(*k*) *Sandius* Enuc. Hist. p. 231.
mended;

mended; they were still Heretics; and the scandal fell upon the Fathers themselves^(l). For when the *Antenicens*, to whom both the *Athanasians* and *Arians* appealed at first for the primitive Faith of the Church, were found to be of the same opinion as *Arius* in the two great points of Coequality and Consubstantiality; instead of disculpating *Arius*, they accused the Fathers themselves to whom they appealed: and thus we find that *Origen* is sometimes called the fountain of *Arianism*; sometimes *Dionysius* of *Alexandria*, sometimes *Lucian* the Martyr. And many others, who had been esteemed as Orthodox in the ages in which they lived, long before *Arius* was born; are branded by the moderns with the imputation of Heresy, merely because he believed as they did who lived before him. *Gelasius* upon this account rejects *Clemens Alex.* *Tertullian*, *Julius Afric.* *Origen*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, *Eusebius Cæs.* &c^(m). And Cardinal *Perron* taxes *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, with the same Heresy; and allows of all the Fathers before the Council of *Nice*, that the *Arians* would gladly be tried by them. In like manner *Petavius* shews, that all Antiquity was *Arian*; and tells us, that Bishop *Alexander*, the great opposer of *Arius*, exaggerated matters; when he asserts, that the inequality was

(l) Let. I. p. 41.

(m) Let. I. p. 47.

the invention of *Arius*(*n*).—What greater proofs can be expected, that the *Arians* held the *Antenice* Faith? But however, the *Homöousian* doctrine was established at *Nice*; by the means already mentioned: and was understood for many ages after, agreeably to the doctrines of the *Athanasians*.

But at length the *Peripatetic* Philosophy, or the Philosophy of *Aristotle*, which for many ages had been neglected, began to please the Students in good Literature; and this Philosophy being renewed by the *Mahometan Arabians*, and thence sucked-in by the School-men, utterly abolished the Evangelical Theology(*o*). The *Arabian* Commentators, says Dr. *Robinson*, were deemed the most skilful and authentic guides in the study of *Aristotle's* System; and from them the School-men derived the Genius and Principles of their Philosophy(*p*).

And now the *homöousians* began to divide among themselves, as formerly; some arguing upon the old *Athanasian* Principles of three Substances joined together by a *Perichoresis*, like a three-fold cord; and others upon the Philosophy of *Aristotle*. And this was the dispute between *Peter Lombard* and Abbot *Joachim*. Upon which the *Aristotelian* Trinity, that three

(*n*) *Sandius* Enuc. Hist. c. 28. (*o*) *Owen's* Theol. l. iv. Note 28.—*Prideaux* Connex. ad an. 336.

Hypostases are one God, because they have One and the same numerical Essence, or *Ousia*; which is the same with the old *Sabellian* doctrine of *Praxeas*, *Paulus Samosatenus*, *Artemon*, &c. prevailed over the *Athanasian* doctrine of the *Perichoresis*; and over all others: and was established at the fourth general Council of *Lateran*(*q*). And thus Pagan Christianity, which was as Idolatrous in this century, as ever the worship was in *Egypt* or *Babylon*; received the farther improvement of a *Mahometan* Commentary; and St. *Athanasius* gave way to *Aristotle*.—But still the *Nicene* and *Athanasian* Creeds were maintained in the *Romish* Church, as if they had been consistent with one another; and were transplanted altogether into the Protestant Churches: And the *English* Clergy continue to subscribe to them all; and the writing in defence of them all together is looked-upon as the greatest sign of Orthodoxy.

1st. That there is only *One* divine Substance to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as established by the Council of *Lateran*, and received into the Church of *England* in her second and fourth Articles, and the proper Preface to the Communion Service for Trinity Sunday(*r*).

2dly. That there are *three* divine Substances joined together inseparably; which is the Sense of

(*q*) See Let. I. p. 27. Note XX. and Note XXII. (*r*) *Ibid.*

the *Nicene* Council and Creed, as explained by the learned(s).

3. That there are three *separate, divine Substances*; each of which has all the divine Attributes, and is of himself both God and Lord. And this is the doctrine of the *Athanasian* Creed, as it is called; and it can be no otherwise explained. For each of them of himself cannot be God, except each be of himself a distinct and separate Substance. And this was the doctrine of *Cyril, Gregory Nyssen, &c*(t).

Here we see, that every sect of the *homöousians* has had its day: and made use of it to establish its own particular Sense of the word: though ever so contradictory to what was established before. For the Christians dress-up their Faith, as the *English* do their Kings for a Coronation: they load them with every new Ornament that comes in vogue; but leave off nothing that was ever in use before.

This is the present state of the Controversy. The three opposite Systems are all held for true; and the denial of any one of them is heretical: and what the penalty of Heresy is, may be seen in the Law-books. So that however the Christians may justly boast, when they speak of Christianity in general, that it has been propa-

(s) See the Account of the *Perichoresis* above, p. 60, 64. and *Nicep.* Vol. II. 245. 252. (t) Let. I. p. 62.—Let. VII. 868.

gated by Reason and Argument; the *homöousian* doctrine has from the beginning been supported by Violence and Fraud, as I shall more fully prove; and does not stand upon the same foundation with the other doctrines of Christianity, which have been always held in the Church. St. *Au'stine* makes this distinction; when he says, "it is reasonable to believe, that
 " whatever has been generally received in the
 " Church, and always held the same without
 " being ordained by a Council, comes to us by
 " Apostolical Tradition(*u*).” And *Vincentius Lirinensis* says, " *quod ad omnibus, &c.* what
 " has been held by all, every where, and at all
 " times, is catholic:" but it does not appear by these marks, that the *homöousian* Doctrine is either Apostolic or Catholic. And indeed how can it be supposed to be so; when it is confessed by *Jerom*, that the Apostles themselves were not such proficientes as to understand the generation of the Son from the Father's Substance (*x*): and it is allowed both by the Papists and Protestants, that it was not understood and settled till the 4th Century (*y*): and we are told by *Theodoret*, that the *Nicene Form of Faith* was invented; to demolish the Faith of the *Arians*(*z*).

(*u*) *August. de Baptis. con. Don. c. 24.* (*x*) *Patrick's*
Witnesses of Christianity, p. 10. (*y*) See Let. I. p. 46.
 182. 187. 191. (*z*) *Theod. l. II. c. 18.*

CHAPTER V.

What Authority is to be allowed to the General Councils; and particularly to the Council of Nice, by which the Homöousian Doctrine was at first established.

THE Church of *England*, which is by much the most respectable of all the Protestant Churches; declares in the 21st Article, that General Councils may err; and that the Church of *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome*, have erred; not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies; but in matters of Faith. And to this Article every Boy, as soon as he leaves School, and is admitted as a member in the University of Oxford, is required to subscribe; so that even children are looked upon by the Church of *England*, as of sufficient Capacity to judge concerning the decrees of Councils; and as having a right to censure them, when they find them to be erroneous.

The Church of *Rome* receives or rejects the general Councils as she pleases; nay, sometimes approves one part of a Council, and rejects another; as in those of *Constance* and *Frankfort*(a). *Pigbius*, the antagonist of *Luther*,

(a) *Drelincourt faux Visage de l'Antiq.*

maintains; that General Councils are not of divine Original, but merely human: and *Gregory* the Ninth asserts; that no Council can give Law to the Roman Church(*b*). In short, they neither receive the Fathers, nor Councils(*c*); unless they are approved of by the Pope, and agree with the current opinions(*d*).

The sixth general Council, confirmed by Pope *Adrian*, defined; that Marriage was dissolved by Heresy: The Council of *Trent*, confirmed by Pope *Pius*, the Fourth, defined; that it was not. The Council of *Constance* decreed, that a General Council was above the Pope: The last *Lateran* Council condemned this decree. The Council of *Basil*, confirmed by Pope *Nicholas*; was reprobated by the last *Lateran* Council, confirmed by Pope *Leo X*(*f*).

The little regard the Western Churches pay to General Councils, even when headed by the

(*b*) *Ibid.* p. 251.—De' Decretali di *Greg.* ix.

(*c*) *James's* Corruption of the Fathers.

(*d*) *Drelincourt*, p. 157.—And so Cardinal *Cusanus* at the Council of *Basil*; Scripturas non ad esse; sed ad bene esse Ecclesiæ facere; Tanto dignius Verbum Dei tradi, quanto ab annis scriptura remotius. Explicandam Scripturam esse juxta currentem Ecclesiæ ritum: qua sententiam mutante, Dei etiam judicium mutetur. See *Dan. Geddes* Hist. Evang. Renovat. Tom. I. p. 32. who cites *Cusanus's* 7th. Ep. to the *Bohemians*. *Heidogger* Hist. Papat. p. 180. cites the same words. A. Deacon *Blackburne's* Discourses.

(*f*) See Dr. *Stratford*, Discourse on the Necessity of Reformation, in the Tracts on Popery; Vol. I. p. 16. No. 177.

Pope,

Pope, we may see in this; that they make no scruple to contradict their decrees without the least authority from any other; as appears in no less material a point, than the fixing of a public Creed. It was a question in the days of *Cyril* and *Theodoret*, about the year 360; whether the Holy Ghost received his Essence from the Father only; or from the Father and the Son: The *Nicene* Council had not considered it; but in their Creed had said simply, "I believe in the Holy Ghost;" and there the genuine *Nicene* Creed ends(g). The second general Council, viz. that of *Constantinople*, thought this Article wanted some addition; and added, *the Lord and giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father*: and it was voted in the Council of *Ephesus*, that there should be no addition made to this. [And all these Councils are Standards of Orthodoxy in *England*.]—But the question being agitated in the West, whether the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son; they carried it in the affirmative; and added *filius* to the *Constantinopolitan* Creed; and sung it publicly in their Liturgy. This was done in the *Spanish* and *French* Churches. The matter was referred to *Leo III.*; who concluded against the addition to the ancient Creed, which Creed had been authorised by a general Council, and

(g) So it is given by *Athanasius*, *Niceph.* Vol. II. p. 101.
received

received by the whole Church: and he had the Creed engraven in Greek and Latin on silver plates, without the addition; and set-forth in the Church behind the altar of *St. Peter*; not to be altered. But not long after, the following Popes, more in love with their own authority than the peace and unity of the Church, admitted the addition; and *Nicholas the First* was condemned for so doing. And yet it continues still in all the western Churches, as the Orientals complain; contrary to a general Council and Pope, which prohibited all additions(*b*). Bishop *Prideaux* in his Synopsis of the Councils tells us; that in the second Council of *Lions* [the twelfth general Council in 1274] *Michael Palæologos* the Emperor was compelled by necessity to make his *Greeks* subscribe *Filioque*; who nevertheless recanted as they went home. And thus *Filioque* has been kept in the western Church, *in defiance* of General Councils and Popes, till 1274; and *with the decree* of the second Council of *Lions*, ever since. And so sanguine is the western Church upon it; that in the first Canon of the Council it declares, *Damnamus & reprobamus*, &c. we damn and reprobate all such, as presume to deny the Holy Spirit doth eternally proceed from the Father and Son. And on the other hand the eastern

(*b*) See *Pearson* on the Creed; p. 325.

Churches on every Holy Thursday excommunicate as Schismatics and Heretics all the Latins; (so they call the Western Churches) who hold *Filioque*. And thus one half of Christendom is damned by the other half; and the compliment is returned.

And here I cannot help remarking; that if the Church, at the time when this dispute began, believed as it now professes to believe; viz. that the Father and Son are of the same *one* Substance; nothing could be more absurdly ridiculous than the whole dispute. For what could they possibly mean by the question, whether the holy Ghost proceeded from *one* Substance or from *both*; when there was but one Substance to dispute about?

Here we see, how little deference the Christian Churches pay to the Authority of General Councils; when it runs contrary to the fashionable doctrines. And yet even the Protestants sometimes extol this Authority almost to an Infallibility; as if such Councils had something in them beyond the common assistance of the Spirit.

“ I make no matter of Faith,” says Dr. Hammond; “ because delivered neither by
“ Scripture, nor Apostolic Tradition; yet I
“ shall number it among the *piè credibilia*, that
“ no General Council, truly such, ever hath
“ erred, or shall err, in matters of Faith.”

On

On the contrary Archbishop *Tillotson*, speaking of the seventh General Council, says: “If
“a general Council of Atheists had met together,
“with a design to abuse Religion by
“talking ridiculously about it; they could
“not have done it more effectually.” But this perhaps might not have been looked-upon by Dr. *Hammond*, as a general Council.—

Here then the first question which offers itself to the mind will be; where are these General Councils, which are *truely such*, to be found; and the answer I am afraid, will be very unsatisfactory, viz. that they are purely imaginary; and there was never such a thing in the world as a General Council; and probably never will be: Except we take the definition of it from *Hosius*(i). They were all confined to the *Roman* Empire; and consequently, under the influence of Emperors and Popes; and were not extended to the whole world, as the Histories and Subscriptions prove(k). And the

(i) It was a curious answer that was made to *Stanislaus Orechovius*, a zealous Romanist, by Cardinal *Hosius*; who was appointed President of the Council of *Trent*. He writes to *Hosius*, that he could not understand how the Church could be represented, without the Patriarchs of *Constantinople* and *Antioch*; or be an œcumenical Council, without them. To which *Hosius* replies; that the Pope being Oecumenical Patriarch, a Council called by him is an Oecumenical Council. *Hof. op. p. 373.* (k) *Baxter Ch. Hist. p. 45.*

answer of the sixth Council of *Constantinople* to *Vigilius* Bishop of *Rome*, who refused to sit with them, because there were few of the western Bishops there; confirms it beyond Exception: viz. "that the meeting of the rest ought not
" to be delayed for the western Bishops; for in
" the four General Councils there were never
" found a multitude of the western Bishops;
" but only two or three Bishops and a few
" Clerks(*l*)."

But suppose that there have been General Councils, yet here arises another difficulty; that it is by no means agreed between the *Athanasians* and *Arians*, nor between the Protestants and Papists, nor between the Eastern and Western Churches, nor even among the Papists themselves; how many of them there were, nor which were, General; and which were not so: and no body can tell, which Councils to trust to; till these questions be first determined.

There are no fewer than four Councils, which lay claim to the title of the eighth General Council; and the Pope was present either in person or by his legates, at them all. Three of these were held at *Constantinople*; the first, in 861, in which *Ignatius* the Patriarch of *Constantinople* was deposed; the next in 870; in which he was restored, and *Photius* deposed;

(*l*) *Baxter's Ch. Hist.* p. 181.

and.

and the third, in 879, when, after the death of *Ignatius*, *Photius* was restored(*m*). From hence we may see, that even the Councils themselves which are called General, paid but very little respect to one another: and were so far from imagining they could not err; that they have made no scruple to abrogate the decrees of those that went before them, and establish new and contrary ones in their stead; just as they pleased(*n*). And no man will wonder at this, if he considers the History of those times.—

“ It was long before *Constantine*, that the
 “ generality of Christians had lost much of the
 “ primitive Sanctity and Integrity both of doc-
 “ trine and manners. Afterwards, when he
 “ had greatly enriched the Church, they began
 “ to fall in love with honour and civil power:
 “ and then the Christian Religion went to
 “ wreck. First Luxury and Sloth, and then a
 “ great drove of Heresies and Immoralities
 “ broke loose among them; and these begat
 “ Envy, Hatred, and Discord; which abound-
 “ ed every where. At last they that were link-
 “ ed together into one Brotherhood by that
 “ holy band of Religion, were as much at va-
 “ riance and strife among themselves, as the
 “ most bitter enemies in the world could be.

(*m*) *Jenkins*' Historic. examination of the Authority of Councils, pt. II. p. 25. (*n*) *Baxter*'s Ch. Hist. 202. sect. 67.

“ (See

“ (See Let. I. p. 14.) No reverence for, no
 “ confideration of their duty was left among
 “ them :—the Pastors and Bishops and some-
 “ times those very Fathers whom we admire
 “ and extol to so high a degree, every one of
 “ whom was a leader of their several flocks;
 “ those very men, I say, fought for their Bishop-
 “ ricks, as Tyrants did for their Sovereignty;
 “ sometimes throughout the City, sometimes
 “ in the very Churches, and sometimes at the
 “ Altar; Clergymen and Laymen fought pro-
 “ miscoufly; they slew one another, and great
 “ Slaughters were made on both sides.”—*Mil-*
ton against Salmasius, chap. iv.

In the midst of these times, for *Constantine*
 did not call the *Nicene* Council till about the
 20th year of his reign; it can hardly be ima-
 gin'd that any greater Reformation could be
 made in the Church by a general Council, than
 was made at the Council of *Trent*: when Igno-
 rance and Ambition carried all before them.

But I proceed to consider particularly the
 Authority of this Council at *Nice*. *Sabinus*
 Bishop of *Heraclea* in *Thrace*, in his *Collectio*
Conciliorum (which *Valesius* speaks-of as a very
 useful work, frequently quoted by *Socrates* in
 his Ecclesiastical History (o);) writes, that the
 Bishops who met together at *Nice* and formed

(o) *Socr. i. 8, 9.*

the Creed, were *imperiti, rudes, inscii, indocti, omniumque rerum ignari*; without skill, or experience, or knowledge, or learning, and ignorant of all things. *Petavius* calls them *rudes & illiteratos*; *Calvin* calls them *Fanaticos*; and *Musculus* says, they were *à Satana instigati* (p); *Peter Martyr* writes, *ita eos affectibus agitados, ut sese ceu ἀλάστορες aut Furiae gesserint; bilique et stomacho tantum indulserint*(q). *Beza* says; such was the folly, ignorance, ambition, and wickedness of many Bishops, even in the *best of times*; if compared with those that followed, that you would suppose the Devil was president in their Assemblies(r).

Archbishop *Wake* observes; that scarce any thing in Antiquity either more exposed the Christian Religion heretofore, or may more deserve our serious Attention *at this day*; than the violence, the passion, the malice, the falseness, the oppression, which reigned in most of the Synods held by *Constantine* the first, and

(p) *Sandii* Euc. Hist. lib. II. p. 19.
Kings, xii.

(q) On Ist

(r) Omitto quod ipsa temporum Historia manifeste probat; optimis illis temporibus (si cum posterioribus conferantur) eam fuisse nonnullorum Episcoporum partim Ambitionem, partim futilitatem & Ignorantium, ac multorum etiam apertissimam ac desperatissimam Improbitaltem; ut Satanam plane cœtibus eorum præfuisse, vel ipsi cæci facillime perspiciant. *Beza* in his dedication of the New Test.

after him by the following Emperors; upon occasion of the *Arian Controversy*(s).

Mr. *Andrew Marvel* says; it seems to have been a pitiful business; attended with all the circumstances of other worldly affairs; conducted by a spirit of ambition and contention; the first, and so the greatest œconomical blow, that by the Christians was ever given to Christianity—a mere imperial or ecclesiastical machine; no free agent; but wound-up and let-down by the hand of the workman.—

And this is confirmed by Sir *Isaac Newton*; who observes, that “as soon as the Empire became Christian, the *Roman* Emperors began to call general Councils out of the Provinces; and by prescribing to them what points they should consider, and influencing them by their interest and power, they set-up what party they pleased(t).”

Mr. *John Hales* of *Eton* says of Councils in general; It was never heard of in any profession, that conclusion of Truth went by plurality of voices; the Christian profession alone excepted: and I have often mused, how it came to pass; that the way, which in all other sciences is not able to warrant the poorest conclusion; should be thought sufficient to give Authority in Di-

(s) Authority of Princes, p. 307.
 13315

(t) On the Prophecy,
 vinity,

vinity, the supreme Empress of Sciences. And of the Council of *Nice* in particular, he says; If the Discretion of the chief guides and directors of the Church, did, in a point so trivial, so inconsiderate [as the time of keeping *Easter*] so manifestly fail them; as not to see the Truth in a subject, wherein it is the greatest marvel how they could avoid the sight of it; can we, without the imputation of extreme grossness and folly, think such poor spirited Persons competent judges of the questions now in dispute between the Churches (*u*)?

Binius indeed informs us, that several of the Fathers ascribed divine Inspiration to this Council; calling it the word of God, as *Atbanasius*; others, the divine Oracles of the Holy Ghost (*x*). —But perhaps no more was mean'd by this, than by the English Legislature; when we are told, in the Statute that first established the Liturgy in England, that it was concluded by the Bishops with one uniform agreement, *by the aid of the Holy Ghost* (*y*). For, notwithstanding this, it has undergone four famous alterations since that time: which certainly would not have been suffered, if the words had been understood in a strict sense. And it is just the same with the Councils: they always bring-in

(*u*) *Hales'* Tracts. (*x*) Note on the Councils, tom. I. p. 261. (*y*) *Cbifhull's* (Archdeacon of *Essex*) charge in 1711.

the Holy Ghost to abet their decisions, whether orthodox or heretical; and succeeding Councils look upon it as mere matter of Form, and make no scruple to rescind them. Thus the general Council of *Sirmium* in 357 believed so little of the Inspiration of *Nice* in 325; that 300 Bishops out of the West, besides the Eastern Bishops, made no ceremony in rescinding their decrees; and drawing a new Confession of Faith; from which the *Shibboleth Homöousios* was rejected.

We find that the Emperor *Constantine*, notwithstanding he knew the influence of a more powerful agent upon their determinations; and had a bundle of their Papers, stuffed with the accusations of the Bishops against one another; (which he very prudently burn'd) thought fit to pay them this great and profane compliment; that what 300 Bishops had agreed upon, ought not to be any otherwise esteemed, than the Sentence of God himself; especially since the Spirit of God could not fail to sit upon the minds of so famous men; and impart to them the mind and will of God(z).—This is the argument which *Socrates* uses against *Sabinus*; who, as I observed, found fault with the *Nicene Creed*; and said it was drawn up by ignorant and unskilful men. To which *Socrates* answers,

(z) See his Letter, Sec. I. ix.

though

though they might be rude and unskilful; yet being assisted by God, they could not err from the Truth (a)!

But this being a *Petitio Principii*, Bishop Bull endeavours to amend this argument; as follows—*quam bypothesin si quis nolit admittere, poterit ad id ipsum. Argumentatio Socrates ita institui & formari. Patres Nicæni ut imperiti & rudes fuisse fingantur; pii tamen certe maximam partem fuere: Incredibile autem est, tot viros sanctos & probatos, ex omnibus orbis Christiani regionibus convenientes, (qui qualicunque alias imperitia laboraverint, certe ignorare non poterant elementariam de S. S. Trinitate doctrinam, etiam Catechumenis tradi solitam, aut quid ipsi ea de re a majoribus accepissent) nefarie conspirare potuisse ad hoc, ut receptam in Ecclesia fidem de primario Christianismi articulo innovarent(b).*

Though they might be supposed to be unskilful and unlearned, yet being for the most part pious, it is incredible that so many holy men, brought from all parts of the Christian world, who, whatever might be their defects, certainly could not be ignorant of the doctrine of the Trinity, which was taught even to their Catechumens; or what they had received from their ancestors upon that Subject; should wickedly

(a) Socr. I. ix—Niceph. viii. 25.

(b) Bulli op. p. 2.

conspire to make *innovation* in the *received* doctrine of the Church in the primitive Article of Christianity.

Now all this laboured Paragraph, from the beginning to the end, is mere fallacy and imposition.

First, the Emperor supposes; that what 300 Bishops had agreed upon, ought not to be esteemed any other than the Spirit of God; and *Socrates* says, being assisted by the Spirit of God they could not err from the Truth.—But where do we find, that they were assisted by the Spirit of God? or any promise that God will assist Christian assemblies in the discussion of such metaphysical questions as they disputed about; and which the New Testament every where avoids? Or if the Spirit of God did assist some of them; how shall we know, which party it was that He assisted? or where shall we find, that, in such wrangles, the Spirit of God goes with the Majority of votes? But the difficulty is as great, if the Spirit of God *did* assist them; as if it did *not*. For what shall we then say to the Council of *Ariminum*, which consisted of a greater number of Bishops a few years after; who rejected the word *homoousios*, denied the Father and Son to be consubstantial, and condemned the *Nicene* Council,

Council, and the word *Ousia*, because not used in Scripture (c) ?

Au'stin, in his dispute with *Maximus*, the *Arian* Bishop; was sensible, that, upon this account, the authority of the Council of *Nice* was of no signification. He knew, that the Council of *Ariminum*, which was against him; was in other things equal to that of *Nice*; and in number superior. If the Council of *Nice* was authorised by the Emperor *Constantine*, so was this by *Constans*: If there were 300 Bishops at *Nice*; *Bellarmino* and *Melchior Canus*, Bishop of the *Canaries*, reckon 600 at *Ariminum* (d); others say, 1000; and therefore *Bellarmino* calls it a General Council; upon which account *Au'stin* declares to *Maximus*, that he will not avail himself of the *Nicene* Council; but the question should be determined by Scripture and Reason. *Nec ego Nicænum, nec Tu debes Ariminense, tanquam præjudicaturus, proferre Concilium; nec ego hujus, nec tu illius Auctoritate detineris. Scripturarum Auctoritatibus, non quorumcunque propriis, sed utrisque communibus Testibus, causa cum causa, res cum re, ratio cum ratione certet*(e).

2dly. It is incredible, says the Bishop; that so many holy men should wickedly conspire, &c.

(c) *Sandii* E nuc. Hist. lib. II. p. 121.—*Soc.* lib. III. ch. 32.

(d) *Drelincourt* Faux Vis. de l'Antiq. p. 215.

(e) *Heiron.* lib. III. c. 14.

but

but *Sabinus* did not accuse them of *wickedly conspiring*; but of being ignorant and unlearned.

3dly. The Bishop argues, that it is incredible they should conspire to *make an Innovation* in the received Doctrines. But this is the very question in dispute; whether the Innovation was made by the *Arians*, or *Athanasians*. It is certain, that the *Arians* were willing to be tried either by the Scripture or Antiquity: but with this the *Athanasians* were not content.

In the 5th Council of *Antioch*, which was called by *Constantius* in obedience to his Father's orders, to inquire into the Faith after the affair of *Arius* was over; the Bishops of the Council declared to the Bishops of every City, that they believed agreeably to the Faith delivered down from the beginning, prescribed; and that they were not followers of *Arius*, but rather had admitted him, upon a thorough examination of his Faith.—And these presented a Form of faith, in which the word *homöousios* was not mentioned; nor was it said, that the Father and Son were Coeternal—and after some stay at *Antioch*, they found and published also the Form, which was composed by *Lucian* the Martyr; from which the same word was rejected; and it was said, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were *three Hypostases*; but in Consent one. And *Athanasius* says; a third Form, produced by *Theophronius*, was approved-
of

of in the Council; in which nothing was mentioned concerning *Ousia*, or Substance(*f*).—It does not therefore appear, that the *rejecting* the word *homöousios*, was an Innovation of the *Arians*; but more probably that the *introducing* it, was an Innovation of the *Athanasians*, for we are well assured, that it was neither in the Scripture, nor in the most ancient Creeds; and that it was condemned at the Council of *Antioch*, long before the Council of *Nice*.

4thly. The Bishop says; so many *holy men*, brought from *all parts*, could not be ignorant of the *Doctrine of the holy Trinity*; which was *taught* to the *Catechumens*, and which they *received from their Ancestors*.—As to their *holiness*; it does not appear, that the *Athanasians* were more holy than the *Arians*, or the Council of *Nice* more holy than that of *Ariminum*: nor that *Eusebius* and his friends were more holy, when they subscribed to the *Nicene Faith* for fear of the Emperor; than when they resigned their Bishopricks, and went into banishment, upon repenting of that Subscription. There were certainly holy and unholy men on both sides; and in persecuting one another, they were all unholy. But whatever were their moral Characters, they were all subject to mistakes: and from *whatever part of the world* they were brought, they were all under the dominion of the Emperor; and under his influence. And to say they could not be

(*f*) *Sand. Eccles. Hist. Enuc. lib. II. p. 67.*

ignorant of the doctrine of the Trinity, is nothing to the purpose. The *Arians* believed the Trinity, as well as the *Athanasians* (g); and so did Dr. South, and Dr. Sberlock, and Dr. Clarke, and Dr. Waterland; and yet they found matter enough to dispute about, in explaining their several Opinions.—As to the notion; that the *Athanasian* Doctrine was taught to their Catechumens, and received from their Ancestors; there is not the least probability of it. *Socrates* calls it a logical Controversy; and tells us, it pervaded all *Egypt*, *Libya*, *Thebais*, and all the Oriental Provinces; and increased to that degree, that in every City the Bishops were divided against the Bishops; and the People against the People: that it was a doubtful question, never before discussed; that many of the Bishops and Clergy sided with *Arius*, and many pious, venerable and ingenious men; and the Synods of *Bithynia* and *Palestine* communicated with him, and wrote to all the Bishops to do the same (h). Even Bishop *Alexander*, the great opposer of *Arius*, was a long time wavering between the two opinions; before he fixed (i). And it plainly appears from the letter of *Constantine* to *Athanasius* and *Arius*; that it was not then looked-upon as an Article of Faith; but a question of fruitless curiosity (k). If these things are true, how

(g) See his Creed, in the Append. No. 3.

(h) *Socr.* lib. I. c. 15. p. 426, 427, 428. (i) *Nic.* VIII. c. 5. (k) See above ch. II.—*Socr.* lib. I. c. VII.

is it possible, that it should be a doctrine, which was taught to the Catechumens; and received from their Ancestors?

Socrates says, in answer to *Sabinus*; that there were many wise and learned men at the *Nicene* Council: and there is no doubt of it: and yet the Creed might be formed by Men of a very different character, as to this particular article; who might make the majority against them, and outvote them; as they seem to have done in some questions of the utmost importance, two of which are ready at hand. 1st. We know, that it was designed by this Council; that no words should be used, in settling this article of Faith; but what were in Scripture(*l*). And this was approved of, as I observed, by men of the best sense; such as *Eusebius*, *Basil*, *Athanasius*, &c(*m*). And yet the Council rejected the Creed, which *Eusebius* had drawn in that manner; and preferred another with the unscriptural word *homöousios* in it, which is purely metaphysical. Another instance we find upon the important subject of Persecution. *Athanasius* speaks very strongly against the use of Violence in matters of Religion as the work of the Devil; and condemns the *Arians*, in banishing those who would not subscribe to their

(*l*) See *Cudworth*, 608. (*m*) See ch. I.

Q q q q q q

decrees;

decrees; as friends to the Devil: and yet this very Council banished *Arius*, *Euzoius*, &c. for Non-subscription. How could these things be; except the opinions of the wise and learned had been over-ruled by the Ignorant; or, what is much the same thing in the present argument; unless the minds of the wise and learned were too much inflamed by their Interests and Passions, to listen to the voice of Reason.—

So that notwithstanding there might be many wise men present at the *Nicene* Council, which *Sabinus* does not deny; but particularly mentions *Eusebius Pamphili*, as one who deserved to be credited (*n*); the words of *Sabinus* may still be true, that the Creed was composed by unskilful and unlearned men, for any thing that appears to the contrary from what has been said by the Emperor *Constantine*, *Socrates*, or Bishop *Bull*.

But I must not leave this subject without taking notice of a Miracle, which is said to have been wrought in favour of the Council; for, if the power of God appears in confirmation of it, all arguments against it must give-way. The account is thus given us by *Nicephorus*.
 “ During the time that the acts of the *Nicene*
 “ Council were finishing, it happened that two
 “ of the Bishops died; who had not yet sub-

(*n*) *Socr. lib. I. ch. vii.*

“ scribed.

“ scribed. The rest of the Fathers coming to
 “ the common burial-place, and standing round
 “ the Tomb holding the libel (o) in their
 “ hands; said to them, as if they had been
 “ alive and heard them: Divine Fathers, ye
 “ have fought a good fight with us; ye have
 “ finished your course; ye have kept the Faith:
 “ And now if you think what we have done,
 “ ought to succeed; because ye now see more
 “ clearly; being enlightened by the immediate
 “ Glory of the Trinity; it is proper you should
 “ sign the libel together with us. So saying
 “ they laid the libel sealed upon the grave; and
 “ passed the night without sleep: and the next
 “ day coming to the grave, the seal being un-
 “ broken, they unfolded the libel, and found
 “ *their* Subscriptions added to the rest, as yet
 “ fresh, and in these words. We Chrysanthus
 “ and Musenius, who agreed with all the Fa-
 “ thers in the first holy and Oecumenical
 “ Council of *Nice*, though translated in body,
 “ with our own hands have subscribed the
 “ libel(p).”

What may be thought to confirm this story
 is another account of the interposition of Pro-
 vidence upon a like occasion; and this story is
 favoured by no less a man than Bishop *Bull*.
 We are told by *Gregory Nyssen*, in his life of

(o) In which the decrees of the Council were contain'd.

(p) *Niceph.* viii. 23.

Gregory Thaumaturgus; that the Virgin *Mary*, accompanied by St. *John*, appeared to *Gregory* in a vision; and explained to him the whole mystery of Godliness in a short Creed, which he took down in writing as they dictated it to him; and left a Copy of it as a legacy to the Church of *Neocæsarea*, of which he was Bishop.

But Dr. *Whitby* has collected together such reasons, as seem to invalidate the Credibility of this account; having shewn that the Creed is contradictory to the principles of *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, in his later writings; that it was unknown to *Basil*, the brother of *Gregory Nyssen*; that in all disputes with the *Arians* till the age of *Justinian*, no mention is made of it, nor any appeal to it, nor afterwards upon the disputes concerning the Holy Ghost(*q*), &c.

And besides, when we are told, that *Spiridon*, Bishop of *Cyprus*, prayed his daughter out of her grave upon so trifling an occasion as the discovery of an ornament, which had been committed to her care a little before she died(*r*), and such like; it renders all the miracles suspected, that are said to be so common in these ages among Jews, Christians, and Pagans.—

(*q*) *Whitby's* preface to his *Quæst. mod. Eccles. Hist.*

(*r*) *Socrat.*

CHAPTER VI.

Of the first four General Councils, and the Authority of their Canons; and the Origin of the present Test of Heresy, which joins the four first general Councils with the four Evangelists.

IT is now time to consider the four first General Councils singly.—The Council of *Nice* consisted of two or three hundred Bishops; but was so far from being a General Council, that there were but five western Bishops present at it, two from *Italy*, one from *France*, one from *Spain*, and one from *Africa*(s). It was held about the year of Christ 325; and Dr. *Prideaux*, Regius Professor of Divinity at *Oxford*, and Bishop of *Worcester*, says of it, “The
“ Canons of *Nice*, being 20, nor is it sufficiently
“ manifest how warrantable, came into the hands
“ of Posterity. And Bishop *Taylor* says, this
“ Council hath been very much abused; and
“ its Authority and great Reputation made it
“ more liable to the fraud and pretences of
“ idle people. For whereas the *Nicene* Fathers
“ made but 20 Canons; for so many and no
“ more were received by *Cecilian*, Bishop of

(s) *Bellarmin.* lib. I. de Concil. c. 17. antepen.

“ *Carthage*

“ *Carthage* (who was at *Nice* in the Council),
 “ by St. *Au'stine* and 200 *African* Bishops with
 “ him; by St. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, by *Atticus* of
 “ *Constantinople*, by *Ruffinus*, *Isidore*, and *Theo-*
 “ *doret*, as *Bononius* witneffeth; yet there are
 “ 80 lately found out in an *Arabian* MS.
 “ and published in Latin by *Turrianus* and *Al-*
 “ *phonfus* of *Pifa*, Jesuits surely, and likely to
 “ be masters of the mint, [which Dr. *Comber*
 “ says, neither *Baronius* nor the Annotator dare
 “ to defend] and not only the Canons, but the
 “ very Acts of the *Nicene* Council are false and
 “ spurious; and are so confessed to be by *Baro-*
 “ *nus*—for the *Nicene* Council was foully tam-
 “ pered with(*a*); and indeed it does not appear,
 “ that the Acts of the Council were ever com-
 “ mitted to Writing, so that most probably
 “ these must be all forged(*b*).”

Two of the Canons of this Council, consi-
 dering that it is one of the Tests of Heresy in
England, are very remarkable. The 3d forbids
 the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons to sleep with
 their wives(*c*). And this agrees with what is
 said by *Jerom* against *Vigilantius*; that if a Bi-
 shop gets children after he becomes a Bishop,
 he shall not be looked upon as a Husband, but

(*a*) *Taylor's* Lib. of Proph. fol. 474. 4to. 118.

(*b*) *Valesius's* Note on *Eusebius's* Life of *Constantine*, B.
 iii. ch. 14.—*Dupin*, Vol. I. p. 318. Note 1.

(*c*) *Niceph.* lib. viii. 19.

as an Adulterer (*d*); “non quasi Vir tenebitur, sed quasi Adulter damnabitur.” We are told indeed by the Ecclesiastical Historians; that this Canon was prevented from being established by *Papbnutius*; who opined, that those who were already married should not be separated from their wives; though those who were not married when they entered into the ministry, should not be allowed to marry afterwards(*e*). But *Dupin* says, this story of *Papbnutius* is of doubtful authority. And so indeed it must be, or how could *Ambrose* in his Epistle to *Vercellius* quote this Canon of the *Nicene* Council against the marriage of Priests; if there were no such Canon?—Besides this, the *Nicene* Canons forbid the Translation of Bishops, Priests, &c. and order those who have been translated to return back to their first Church. They forbid Kneeling at Prayers on Sunday and on the day of Pentecost; and order the Rebaptizing of Heretics; all which things are contrary to the Faith and Practice of the Church of *England*; of whose Orthodoxy this Council is a Test.

What a sad effect this Humour of Creed-making immediately had upon the Church; and

(*d*) *Hierom.* Ques. 117. Vet. & Nov. Test.—See *Sandii* Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. p. 26.—*Dupin*, p. 318.—*Niceph.* lib. vi. c. 36. Note. (*e*) *Niceph.* viii. 20.

what confusion and animosity it introduced; we find by the words of *Hilary*.

“ Since the *Nicene* Council we do nothing
“ but write Creeds; and while we quarrel about
“ words, while we raise questions about Novel-
“ ties, while we fight about ambiguities, and
“ about Authors, and strive about parties;
“ while there is difficulty in consent, and while
“ we anathematise one another, scarce any one
“ is *Christ's*. What a change there was in the
“ last year's Creed! the 1st decrees, that *Homo-*
“ *ousios* should not be mentioned; the next de-
“ crees and publishes it; the third does by in-
“ dulgence excuse the word *Ousia*, as used
“ before by the Fathers uncompounded; the
“ fourth does not excuse, but condemn it; it
“ is come at length to pass; that nothing [pro-
“ fessed] among us or those before us, remains
“ sacred or inviolable. We decree annual and
“ monthly Creeds concerning God: we repent
“ of our decrees: we defend those that repent
“ of them: we anathematise those that we de-
“ fended: we defend other men's opinions in
“ our own, or condemn our own in those of
“ other men; and, while we bite one another,
“ we are consumed one of another.” And how
naturally and unavoidably must all this follow;
from leaving the Scripture, and trusting to the
Traditions and Commandments and Doctrines
of Men!

The

The Second General Council was that of *Constantinople*, *Theodosius* being Emperor; this was held in 381, 382, 383, and is called a General Council; though there was but one Western Bishop present at it. It confirmed the Decrees of *Nice*. Its Canons are reckoned by *Caranza* to be only Seven, by *Langus* Nine, all which except the first are rejected by the Roman Church; and the four last of the Seven do not appear in the Code of *Dionysius*(f). *Baronius* says, the 5th Canon was not received by the Church of *Rome*; and he suspects it to be forged(g). *Bellarmino* says, it was not consented-to by the Pope, and therefore void; so say *Pigbius* and *Coriolanus*(h), agreeable to an ecclesiastical Canon made before the year 340, according to *Nicephorus*, that the Churches ought not to decide any thing in their Synods without the opinion of the Bishop of *Rome*(i); and *Julius* Bishop of *Rome*, in his Epistle to the *Antiochians*, observes the same; and that all such decisions are therefore null(k).

(f) *Dupin* says, The Canons were not approved of for a long time by the Bishops of the West: Not only St. *Leo* rejects them in his 53d Epist. which is now the 80th, but *Gelasius* in his Epistle to *Dardanus*, and St. *Gregory* in his 25th Epist. of the 6th Book. It is not easy to say how many Canons there were in the three Councils of *Constantinople*, which we now speak of; or in which of the three they were made, or whether all in the same. *Dupin*, Vol. I. p. 346. (g) *Baron.* ad ann. 387. (h) *Jenkins*, p. 12. (i) *Nicep.* lib. ix. c. 5. (k) *Ibid.* c. x.

Rrrrrr

For

For information what kind of Bishops they were, who composed this Council, take the following account from *Gregory Nazianzen*; who complains to *Procopius*, that He had never seen a good end to any Council; nor any that did not rather add to the Evils, than reform them: and a Man, says he, that will judge of them there, will sooner contract dishonesty himself; than repress the dishonesty of others (*l*): upon which account he resolved never to meet them. The Courtiers, he says, whether they were true to the Emperor, he knows not; but for the most part were perfidious to God—and the Bishops raging like furious horses in battle, and like madmen casting dust into the air; and under their several banners fulfilling their own contentions, and becoming the determiners of wicked ambition and magnificence; and unrighteous and absurd judges in matters(*m*), &c. The like he has in his Poem *de sua Vita*; οἱ δὲ ποίδοι(*n*), &c. and more to the same purpose in his last Oration *de Episcopis*, Vol. II. and in his 59 Epistle to *Sophronius*(*o*).

There are two Copies of the Council of *Ephe-sus*, which is the 3d General Council; held in the year 434. The first Copy observes eight, the second thirteen Canons. Bishop *Prideaux* says, they were carped at by *Theodoret*; but

(*l*) *Ad Procop.* 814. (*m*) p. 528. *Orat.* 32. (*n*) *Ibid.* p. 24. (*o*) *Baxter's Church Hist.*

freed from objections by *Cyrl(p)*, who presided at that Council. But Dr. *James* remarks, that though all the Editions of the Councils bear the name of *Cyrl*, as presiding at this Council as Pope *Celestine's* deputy; yet it is against the Authority of *Dionysius Exiguus*, and the Greek MSS. He mentions other forgeries in this Council; and has discarded all its Canons. And it is at least 750 years and upwards, as *Daillé* observes, *Anastatius Bibliothecarius*, the Pope's Library-keeper, testified; that these Canons were not any where to be found in the most ancient Latin Copies; withall accusing the Greeks of having forged them(*q*). And *Gregory* the Great witnesseth, that the Church of *Rome* did not receive the Canons of this Council; nor those of the 22d Council of *Constantinople(r)*.

It may be worth while to consider briefly in this place what the chief Subjects were, upon which the four first general Councils were so much concerned; and upon which they made

(*p*) This is the same *Cyrl*, who called the Virgin *Mary* the Mother of God; and the Complement or Supplement of the holy Trinity. See *Herbelot's* Bib. Orient. p. 584. col. 2. and Let. 1. p. 28. (*q*) *Jenkins's* Examination of the Authority of Councils. See Popish Tracts, No. 207 in *Peck's* Collection.—*Daillé* Eng. 47, 48. (*r*) *Brent's* Father *Paul's* Council of *Trent*, p. 320. This seems to be the opinion of *Niceph.* lib. xiii. c. 34.

no scruple to anathematise and persecute all that differed from them.

The grand Error, from whence so many different Heresies (as they are called) arose, was the doctrine of Consubstantiality; which was decreed at *Nice*, and confirmed at the Council of *Constantinople*. And the Councils of *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon* were thoroughly employed in accounting for the Consequences of this doctrine, (viz. the Suffering of an impassible Being) and condemning the different methods as Heresies and Blasphemies, by which many wise and pious men endeavoured to explain it.

After the Council of *Nice*, the Church in general believed that Christ consisted of a human Soul, and of the *Logos*, which *Logos* they supposed to be impassible; and that these two were somehow united: by which means they argued, that the Sufferings of the Soul might *be called* the Sufferings of the *Logos*—but how it could really be so, was what they differed about.

Cyril argued, as I observed in the 2d Chapter; that a Soul and body belonged to the *Logos*: and therefore the Sufferings of these, was the Suffering of the *Logos*; and this is reckoned orthodox.

Eutyches and *Dioscorus* did not see how this could properly be the Suffering of the *Logos*; (though they allowed it to be the Suffering of what

what was joined to the *Logos* :) and therefore they invented a notion, that the flesh or human nature was changed in an *unchangeable* manner(s) into the Divinity (t); and by this the two Natures were united (viz. the divine and human) into one. And the condemning this as Heresy and the deposing these two Bishops as Heretics, was the great Business of the 4th general Council of *Chalcedon*.

On the other hand *Nestorius* believed, that the Union was made by God's dwelling in Man as in a Temple (u); and that he was united to the human Nature, not in Substance; but in Habit and Affection, as a Friend to a Friend(x). And he believed, the two natures divine and human by this union became one; and so the *Logos* suffered, when the human Nature suffered. But this again was a damnable Heresy, and anathematized(y). For the Orthodox did not allow to say, they became one nature; but only they became one Person. And this was the grand point to be settled at the 3d general Council, that of *Ephesus*; to which *Cyril* came, as we are told by *Nicephorus*, with a hostile mind against *Nestorius*(z). *Hostili enim jamjudum erga Nestorium erat animo Cyrillus*: And

(s) *Niceph.* p. 876. (t) *Prateolus*, 145, 177. (u) *Ib.* 348. (x) *Niceph.* 875. (y) *Ibid.* 596. (z) *Ibid.* 513.

so *Nestorius* was deprived and ruined—And thus all these different sects, as they came into power, thought they had a right to deprive, banish, murder, and anathematise one another, just as they pleased; and the Vote of a Council was a kind of Death-warrant.

It may not be amiss to take notice how this Council of *Ephesus* was began and carried on. It began contrary to the remonstrance of the Emperor's officer *Candidianus*; who ordered them to stay for the arrival of the Oriental Bishops, saying that it was the intention of the Emperor to make it a general Council; and not a particular separate Assembly(a). But as they would pay no regard to him, he made his Protest, and left the Council; and sent an account to the Emperor, that things were carried-on with such violence, that he had pronounced all to be null, and charged them to begin a new. To him succeeded *Joannes Comes*; who sent the Emperor word, that all was in confusion; and gave him an amazing account of their strange fierceness; and he was forced at last, in order to prevent sedition, to commit *Nestorius* and *Cyril*, the ringleaders, into custody: and at the second Council of *Ephesus*, which is called a Council of Thieves(b), held only fifteen years after, the Acts of the former Council were read; and all were excommunicated, who did not ap-

(a) *Dupin*, 294.(b) *Euagr.* B. I. c. ix.

prove of them: and the Bishops of that Council (viz. the second of *Ephesus*) declared afterwards at the Council of *Chalcedon*, that they acted against their wills; being under Fear: Condemnation and Banishment being threatened; and Soldiers there with Clubs and Swords. The Bishop of *Ephesus* himself declared, that *Elpidius* and *Eulogius* and many Soldiers threatned him; and *he was not suffered to go out, till he had subscribed.* And *Flavianus*, who offered his appeal, was so beaten and abused, that he died of his hurt(*b*). Thus we see how this third General Council made its way. This is the same Council in which *Nestorius* was condemned for declaring the Virgin *Mary* to be the Mother of Christ, and not *the mother of God*: and saying, I cannot term him God; who was two or three months old(*c*). And accordingly, this Council was anathematized by all the *Nestorians*, who make the chief part of the Eastern Churches inhabiting *Babylon, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Media, &c.*; spreading north to *Cataja*, and south to *India*.—This is the same Council, which decreed Anathema to all those who voted any addition to the *Constantinopolitan Creed*, which declared that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father; and there ended. However, the Church of *England* has not only

(*b*) *Baxter's Ch. Hist.* p. 99.—*Euagr.* B. VII. ch. 33.
 (*c*) *Nicep.* lib. xv,

received the addition which was afterwards made; that he proceeded also from the Son: but continues the same Council to be one of the Tests of Heresy, which forbids *that*, or any *other* addition.

The Actions or Sessions of the fourth General Council of *Chalcedon* in the year 455, according to *Caranza*, are sixteen; to which are added twenty-nine Canons. We plainly see by the Emperor *Leo's* circular letter given us by *Euagrius*; that he did not know what to think of this Council himself: and *Amphilochius* Bishop of *Side* declared against it(*d*). The *Romans* do by no means allow of its Canons; because they were ratified by the Greeks, after the departure of the Ambassadors of *Leo*: neither will they bear with the Twenty-eighth, because it concerns equality of Privileges. This Council was carried on with such violence(*e*), and was so often received and rejected; as plainly proves its present Orthodoxy to depend merely upon the chance of the Die. It was this Council that first offered the Bishop of *Rome* the title of Universal Bishop: as we are informed in a letter from Pope *Gregory* the first to the Emperor *Mauritius*, And the chief Doctrine in it was, anathema to *Nestorius*; and to him who says not that *Mary* was the mother of God. Upon which account it is rejected, together with the

(*d*) *Euagr.* B. II. ch. ix. x.

(*e*) *Nicep.* lib. xv. c. 30.

Council of *Ephesus*, by all the *Nestorians*: and so it was by Pope *Leo*; who in his 53d Epistle to *Anatolius* and his 54th to *Novatian*, and his 53d to *Pulcheria*, accuses it of Ambition and inconsiderate Temerity: And therefore no fit assembly for the habitation of the holy Ghost(f). *Gelasius* and *Bellarmino* declare its decrees to be partly defensible, and partly not. And St. *Gregory* asserts, that the *Constantinopolitans* have corrupted this Council; and suspects the same concerning the Council of *Ephesus*.—" And
 " though this Council of *Chalcedon* hath, *ex post*
 " *facto*, and by voluntary consent of after ages,
 " obtained great reputation; yet they who lived
 " immediately, after it; who observed all the *Cir-*
 " *cumstances* of the thing and the *disabilities* of the
 " *Persons*, and the *uncertainty* of the *truth* of its
 " decrees, by reason of the *inconcludingness* of the
 " Arguments brought to attest it; were of ano-
 " ther mind."

I shall enter into a short-account of these disputes; and in my way shall take notice, how the present Test of Heresy in these Kingdoms first arose; which joins the First four General Councils with the four Evangelists.

After the Council of *Chalcedon*, two Ladies of the highest rank and quality in the *Roman* Empire were of different opinions about its orthodoxy. *Eudocia*, the widow of the late Emperor *Theodosius*, opposed it; *Pulcheria*, the

(f) Bishop *Taylor's* Lib. of Proph. fol. 470.

S fffff

sister

sister of *Theodosius*, and wife of *Marcian*, favoured it. At length the Empress procured the Conversion of her sister-in-law; and all went on in favour of the Council, during the reigns of *Martian* and *Leo*.—But when *Basiliscus* usurped the Empire from *Zeno*, and published circular letters against the Council(g), requiring the Bishops to renounce it; three Patriarchs, and 500 Bishops subscribed to his renunciation: and the Bishops of *Asia* convened at *Ephesus*, presented a Supplication to *Basiliscus*; declaring, “that they had set their hands to it with all joy
“and *alacrity*; and begging him to publish
“nothing contrary to those divine Circular
“Letters; knowing for certain, say they, that
“the whole world will be overturned again,
“and the mischiefs done by the Synod of *Chal-*
“*cedon* will be found small and trivial, which
“yet have effected innumerable murders, and
“have unjustly, and illegally poured forth the
“blood of the Orthodox(h).”

But *Acacius* Bishop of *Constantinople* incited the Monks and populace of *Constantinople* against *Basiliscus*, as a Heretic; upon which being affrighted, he changed his opinion, and commanded the Council to be receiv'd: and with this command the Bishops of *Asia* immediately complied, and sent a penitentiary Letter to *Acacius*;

(g) See the Letters in *Euagr.* B. III. ch. 4, 5. and *Niceph.* lib. XVI. 3.

(h) *Niceph.* lib. XVI. c. 4.

wherein

wherein they declared, “that they had subscribed
 “ed to the circular letters of *Basiliscus* by force
 “and *constraint*, not voluntarily; and they
 “swore to it; and that they had not believed,
 “nor did believe otherwise than agreeable to
 “the Council of *Chalcedon* (i);” and so the
 Council of *Chalcedon* became orthodox once
 more. But upon the restoration of *Zeno* the
 dispute began again; and there were great dis-
 turbances at *Alexandria* and in other places
 about it; and many disputes were held before
Zeno, but nothing was brought to effect, be-
 cause *Zeno* himself did not wholly assent to the
 Council. The Bishops of *Alexandria* and *An-
 tiocb* cursed the Council; and the Bishops of
Rome and *Constantinople* cursed them for so do-
 ing(k). And *Timothy* Bishop of *Constantinople*
 first cursed those who *did not* receive the Council;
 but being rebuked by the Emperor and his
 Archdeacon, he cursed every one that *did* re-
 ceive it(l).

Upon the death of *Zeno*, *Anastasius* became
 Emperor; who left all parties to think of the
 Council as they pleased: upon which they di-
 vided into three parties; some were for every
 word of the Council, and some for cursing it,
 and some for *Peace, and Liberty of Conscience*.
 The *East* one way, the *West* another, and *Lybia*

(i) *Euagr.* ch. IX.—*Niceph.* lib. XVI. c. 9.

(k) *Euagr.* B. III. ch. 22. (l) *Nic.* XVI. 34.

another. Such great Confusion and Blindness, as *Nicephorus* observes, befel the whole world(*m*).

About this time *Xenaias*, Bishop of *Hierapolis*, brought a troop of Monks from *Cynegica* to *Antioch*, to oblige *Flavianus* the Bishop of *Antioch*, to curse the Council, and the Epistle of *Leo*. *Flavianus* refused; and the people defended him, and such a number of monks were slain; that they threw the dead bodies into the river, to save the trouble of burial(*n*). And another troop of monks from *Cælosyria*, hearing of the Bishop's danger, flocked to *Antioch*; and made another slaughter, as great as the former. However, *Xenaias* at last prevailed; and obliged the Bishop to curse the Council(*n*). Upon these disorders *Flavianus* was ejected, and *Severus* was chosen Bishop of *Antioch*; and the first day he got-in, he cursed the Council; though it is said he had promised the Emperor not to do it.

And now comes-in the Test of Heresy, which the Church of *England* still enjoys. The monks of *Jerusalem* were engaged for the Council in the following manner: one *Theodosius*, a monk or abbot, cried out in the pulpit, before a great assembly; “ If any man equal not the four
“ Councils with the four Evangelists, let him

(*m*) *Nic.* ch. 25.—*Euagr.* B. III. ch. 30.

(*n*) *Ib.* XVI. c. 27.

“be anathema.” This voice resolved the monks for the Council; and they took it as a law, that the four Councils should be joined with the Sacred Books(o).

The Emperor, hearing that they went about the Cities to engage them on their side; wrote to their Bishop *Helias* to prevent it: who rejected the Emperor’s letter, and refused. The Emperor then sent soldiers; and the orthodox Monks, gathered by the orthodox Bishops, expelled them the Church(p). The Emperor then expelled the Bishop *Helias*, and put in *John*; but the Monks gained over *John* to their Party; and the Bishops wrote to the Emperor, that they would defend the traditions even to Blood(q).

In the reign of *Justin*, things took another turn at Court; in favour of the Council. A Synod at *Jerusalem* cried up the Council and cried down *Severus*—another at *Tyre* did the same; and another at *Rome* decreed the damnation of the three dead Bishops, *Acacius*, *Euphemius*, and *Macedonius*. *Severus* (r) was seized and deposed; and it is said, he had his tongue plucked out; who had daily cursed the Council, especially in the installing letters, which he

(o) *Euagr.* IV. c. 9, 10. [See *Blackstone’s Comment.* Vol. IV. 49, 50. Stat. 9, 10. of *William III.* c. 33.]

(p) *Niceph.* XVI. 34. (q) *Ibid.* (r) *Euagr.* lib. IV. c. 4.

sent to the Patriarchs in all places. And *Paulus* was made Bishop, with orders to commend the Council; and the Council was cried-up among the most holy Churches(s).

After *Justin*, his Successor *Justinian* resolved also to set-up the Council of *Chalcedon*. He cursed *Severus*; and deposed the two Patriarchs, *Anthemius* of *Constantinople*, and *Theodosius* of *Alexandria*, for not subscribing to the Council, but asserting one Nature in Christ; which was likewise the opinion of the Empress *Theodora*, who made all imaginable provision for those who asserted only one Nature in *Christ*; whereas the Emperor believed two Natures, agreeably to the Council. However the Council was now publicly preached-up and asserted; and no body dared to curse it any more: but those, who would not embrace it, were compelled by innumerable ways to give their consent to it, or were made obnoxious to most severe punishment: for *Justinian* was a violent Persecuter. And from that time nothing of dissension remained in the Churches over the whole world. And thus, by the help of Persecution, to keep all things tight; the four first General Councils became the Tests of Heresy, together with the Four Evangelists. And it is upon these Councils, the last of which confirms the foregoing

(s) *Niceph.* XVI. 9.—For the History in these pages, see *Baxter's* Ch. Hist. 109, 112, 114, 125, 128.

ones, that the *Homöousian* Doctrine depends: Every thing being Herefy in *England*, which is declared to be so by the four first General Councils(a).

But I should not deal fairly with my reader; if I did not acquaint him with the Miracle, which is said to have happened to confirm the decrees of this Council; which in like manner confirms the foregoing ones of *Ephesus*, *Constantinople*, and *Nice*. “When the dispute ran
“high upon this subject, we are told by *Nicephorus*; that it pleased the Holy Ghost and
“the famous men who met together, that their
“determinations should be written in a libel;
“and the decision should be committed to the
“famous Martyr and Virgin *Euphemia*; who
“was bred up at *Chalcedon*, as well as her An-
“cestors. Under the impious *Dioclesian*, when
“she stood before the Tribunal of some wicked
“Governor, she declared; that *Christ* was *God*,
“and the *Son of God*; upon which account
“being excruciated with dreadful torments,
“she was at last cast to the Beasts; and was
“killed by the bite of a Bear: and obtained
“the Crown of her Sufferings for *Christ*; and
“her *divine* body was preserved whole and in-
“corrupt in a marble tomb put up in the
“Church at *Chalcedon*, where it performed the

(a) *Blackstone's Comment. Vol. IV. p. 48, 49.*

“Pro-

“Prodigies I have mentioned. Whereupon
“the Orthodox, as well as their Opponents,
“committing the determination to her imma-
“culate and sacred Body, as to a sincere judge;
“each of them separately laid the form of their
“Faith in a libel at her feet, safely folded and
“sealed: and after the night spent in prayer,
“the next day they opened the Tomb; and
“beheld a new sight, worthy of a right [Ortho-
“dox] judgement. For the libel of the Or-
“thodox was held fast in the hands of the con-
“quering Martyr: but the other, as a thing of
“no value, thrown carelessly at her feet. And
“when Impudence contended against the true
“Faith, after this celestial Determination;
“their Condemnation was more fully confirmed
“as most just: and they, who would not
“consent to the decrees of the Synod, gain-
“ed Ignominy and Disgrace from God and
“Men: And the chief of the Heretics were
“banished to *Gangra*(t).”

Upon the whole, whoever looks into the History of the four first General Councils, will find; that they were carried-on by violence and riot at the time; and by Knavery afterwards. The former of these assertions I trust must appear true, from what has been already said: and the latter, from the accusations, which are brought by the Greek and Latin Churches

(t) *Nicep.* lib. XV. c. 5.

against each other, for corrupting and altering the Canons, and imposing the decrees of one Council for those of another of more authority.

The Editor of the General Councils at *Rome* informs us, in the Preface to the first Volume; that Time and the Fraud of Heretics, have been the cause, that the Acts of the said Councils have not come to our hands safe; nor what remains of them pure and entire. And this testimony of theirs, says Mr. *Daillé*, is to Me worth a thousand others; seeing it comes from such, who, in my opinion, are evidently interested to speak quite otherwise^(u). And again; “when I consider, says he, that the Legates of “Pope *Leo* would have imposed upon the Council of *Chalcedon* these words, *that the Church of Rome hath always had the Primacy*, as a Canon of the Council of *Nice*; I am almost ready to think, that we have scarce any thing of Antiquity left us; that is entire and uncorrupt: except it be in matters of Indifferency, or what could not be corrupted without much noise; and to take this proceeding of theirs, which is come to our knowledge; as an advertisement, purposely given us by divine Providence; to let us see, with how much consideration and advisedness, we ought to receive for the Council of *Nice* and *Constantinople*, that which goes at this Day for such.”

(u) *Daillé* Engl. p. 39.

Anastasius Bibliothecarius, after he has very sharply reprov'd the Ambition of the *Greeks*; and accused the Canons, which they produce of the third General Council, as forged and supposititious; to make short work with them, says in plain terms; that the *Greeks* have corrupted all the Councils, except the first. What then have we now left to build upon, says Mr. *Daillé*; seeing this Corruption hath prevailed so far as the Councils, which are the very heart of the ancient monuments of the Church? And the unfortunate *Richerius*, upon occasion of the Forgery of an Epistle from the Council of *Nice* to Pope *Sylvester* to desire his confirmation, observes; *Equidem cum maximo dolore animi, &c.* "I am obliged to say, with exceeding great
 " grief of mind; that there are no books, in
 " which there are so many and so egregiously
 " counterfeit and spurious writings, as may be
 " read in the tomes of the Councils(x)." And accordingly *Beza*, speaking of them in the dedication of his New Testament, says; *quid, quod quorundam malitia, falsæ Epistolæ, supposita Decreta, ementiti Canones infiniti irrepserunt.*

Now if neither the decrees of the Councils have authority; nor the present Copies of what are considered as such are authentic; what a rotten foundation does the *homöousian* Doctrine rest on!—and whatever else is built upon them.

(x) Pref. in Synod. VIII. Tom. 3. Gen. Con.

This short account of the ancient Councils may give us some notion, what uncertainty there is of meeting with any thing more than mere nominal and temporary Orthodoxy in their decrees; concerning which we may venture to say, in the words of *Rabshakeb*: “Now behold, thou trustest to this staff of a broken reed; on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: So is the Authority of these General Councils to those who trust to it.” And the more modern Councils are to the full as bad as the ancient ones: For men of all ages are much alike; and make use of all advantage, whether right or wrong, to deceive or impose upon mankind, and promote their several parties and interests.—And “therefore those, who call themselves Protestants, insist upon a *national* Council; being persuaded, that what is called a *general Council* is only a vain phantom, which the Popes make use of to deceive the World; a machine which their Legates move as they please(y).” But that my Readers may be more fully convinced of this, and of the mischief that arises to the Church from such General Councils; I beg leave to direct them to the history of the Council of *Trent*, written by Father *Paul*; whose chief design is, to shew; that the Pope’s Legates left the Council no kind of Liberty: that

(y) *Daillé*, 59, 39. *Hist. Concil. Lib. I. p. 36.* *Lett. de Vargas*, p. 5.

the Bishops, who composed it, decided upon matters which they did not understand; [just as *Sabinus* complained they did at *Nice*] and instead of reforming their abuses, the Council hath so far confirmed them; that there is no longer any means to remedy them. Let the Reader to the same purpose consult the Letters and Memoirs of *Vargas*—some particulars of which he may find in Bishop *Burnet's* History of the Reformation(*a*).

“ This *Spanish* Lawyer, *Le Vassor* tells us,
 “ was a great enemy to the Protestants; but
 “ had Light and Equity enough, to make him
 “ deplore the slavery of the Council; to dis-
 “ cover the Irregularities and Artifices in the
 “ Conduct of the Popes and their Legates; to
 “ condemn highly the abuses and nullity of
 “ their Proceeding; and foretell, that, far
 “ from curing the Evils of the Church, such a
 “ Synod would render them incurable! and
 “ both these Writers [*Father Paul* and *Vargas*]
 “ give us a clear and more precise Idea of the
 “ manner in which the affairs of the Council
 “ were managed, and of the Ignorance of the
 “ greatest part of the good Fathers that were
 “ present at it(*b*).”

In short, the depending upon the Authority of these Councils, and putting human Placits

(*a*) Vol. III. p. 177.
Vargas's Letters.

(*b*) *Le Vasser's* Pref. to
 upon

upon a level with the Scripture as the Test of Orthodoxy, is not only the fundamental principle of the grand Apostasy; but will infallibly lead back the Protestants, if they follow it, into all the Depths of Popery, Ignorance, and Superstition. It is certain, beyond all doubt, that the more these human decisions have prevailed in the Church, the more the Scriptures have been neglected. And thus the grand Apostasy from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men, prevailed more and more over the Gospel, with little resistance for many ages, till the time of *Luther*; when the BIBLE began to be considered by the Protestants as the only Rule of Faith: (for they could not defend themselves upon any other Principle, than that of the Scripture or Christian Verity, against the human decrees, which constituted what the Papists called the *Catholic Religion*). But no sooner were their learned Divines thoroughly satisfied; that the Scripture was the only Rule of Faith, that could be depended upon with safety; than they all, in their several Churches, as if by a general infatuation, resolved to substitute some human Composition, either in its stead; or in partnership with it. Thus they deserted the fundamental Articles of the Reformation, which held them together in one body; and by admitting human Tests of Heresy, composed by men of very different sentiments, have divided

divided and subdivided into mere sects and parties, rather than Churches; weakened themselves, as Protestants, against the common Adversary; and encouraged a continual hatred and animosity against one another. For it is but too true; that, whenever the decrees of Councils, or even of particular Churches, have come into competition with the Scripture; they have generally overborne it: and the Churches have been more determined in defence of their peculiarities, than to secure the general Doctrines of Christianity; and the common people more furious against one another upon such differences; than if they had broken all the Commandments.—And these human Compositions have been defended of late, by the modern *Theodossi*, in such an extraordinary manner; especially in degrading the use of Scripture, and its sufficiency as a Rule of Faith; that if we were to judge of the present state of Protestantism by the Arguments lately used by these writers; we should be tempted to observe, that the Toe of the Protestant comes so near the Heel of the Papist, that it galls his Kibe(a).

(a) *Shakespear.*

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

That the Homöousian doctrine, as explained and maintained by the learned among the Ancients and Moderns, is a heap of Confusion and Inconsistency.

HAVING examined into the Authority by which the *homöousian* doctrine is established, and shewn it to be by no means satisfactory; much less so certain, as to be made an argument against the actual descent of Christ from Heaven and his Suffering for Mankind; I shall now consider, what the Christian Divines have advanced, to explain and establish it upon the foot of Reason and Argument.

It is a strange thing to think; that the Christians will not be content with the account given them by the Evangelists, concerning the miraculous Generation of *Jesus Christ*, by the Holy Ghost, of the *Virgin Mary*; in which all Christians and even Mahometans are agreed; upon account of which the Evangelist tells us, that he was called the Son of God (a); and by the belief of which, they are satisfied of his divine mission: but they will presumptuously take upon them to establish, under pain of damna-

(a) *Luke i. 35.*

tion, a particular explanation of his antemundane and eternal Generation: though all the Fathers, from *Irenæus*, freely acknowledge it to be inscrutable; and what the Scripture has nowhere revealed.

That *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God, and that he is *ἐκ Θεοῦ* and *ἐκ πατρὸς*, of God and of the Father; is allowed by all (*b*); nor will any one of the different sects scruple to assert it, according to the definition of *Tertullian*; that every Origin is a Parent, and every thing that arises from an Origin is an Offspring (*c*): nor even, according to the words of *Athanasius*; that whatever is *of* or *from* any one, is the Son of him from whom he is; and whatever is *of* or *from* the Father, is his Son (*d*). For all this, in a figurative Sense, may be admitted; as the word Son was used by the *Platonists*, when they called the *World* the *Son of God*. Whereas, in a strict and literal Sense, it is not true, that every Origin is a Parent; and any thing that is *of* or *from* any thing, is a Son: as Bishop *Pearson* observes of *Eve*, who was not the daughter of *Adam*; though she was *of* or *from* him. But

(*b*) This same expression, *ἐκ Θεοῦ*, is used with relation to men; as in I *Jo.* iii. 9. v. 1, 4. And so the Spirit of Life is *ἐκ Θεοῦ*. *Rev.* xi. 11.

(*c*) Omnis origo est parens; omne quod ab origine profectum Progenies. *Tertul.* adv. *Prax.* c. 8.

(*d*) Quicquid ab aliquo est, ejus Filium esse unde est. *Athan.* op. tom. I. p. 530, and 539.

when

when the *Athanasians* presumed to declare; that nothing is of the Father, except the Word; which comes from his Heart, and is begotten from his Bowels (*e*); many Sects among the Christians were startled, and the *Arians* in particular were highly offended, and with the greatest vehemence opposed it; declaring that according to this doctrine, the Father must be a compound Being, divisible and mutable: and therefore they denied the Fact.

Bishop *Pearson* indeed insinuates, that the *Arians* only pretended to refuse the word *homöousios* upon this account; least they should admit a real composition and division in the Deity: and yet he quotes the following words from *Jerom*, in the very next sentence; which prove it to be no Pretence: “*Origen*, as well as “*Arius* and *Eunomius*, denies the Son to be pro- “duced or born: least the Father should be “divided into Parts(*f*).” And *Arius* objects to the word *Homöousios*, in his letter to Bishop *Alexander*, as follows—“If we understand, I “come, and I came, from the bowels of the “Father, as a part of the *homöousion* or an Emis- “sion or Production, as some do; the Father “must be compounded, divisible and muta-

(*e*) Τὸ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς πατρὸς υἱὸς ἐστὶ. τί δὲ ἐστὶν ἐκ τῆς πατρὸς; εἰ μὴ ὁ Λόγος ὁ ἐκ καρδίας προελθὼν καὶ ἐκ γαστρὸς γεννηθείς. *Athan. op. tom. I. p. 539.*

(*f*) *Hierom. Apol. 2. in Ruff. p. 135.*

“ble(g).” But it is very remarkable, and shews the weakness of the best of men; that the opinions of the *Arians* are scarce ever mentioned by the *Orthodox* Christians, (as they are called) without some little falsification or misrepresentation; in order to manifest their zeal for the Truth.

But to proceed. When the Emperor *Constantine* found it impracticable to silence the dispute upon this subject, he endeavoured, as well as he could, to explain and soften the Terms that were made use of in it. And *Eusebius* says; He satisfied the Bishops, that the word *homöousios* was not to be understood according to the affection of Bodies: for he argued, that as the divine Substance is incapable of Division or Section; the Generation from the divine Substance must consequently be effected without any division or section: *divinis arcanisque rationibus*; in a divine and unknown manner(*b*).—To which it was answered, not only by the *Arians*, but by all the *Homöousians*, who differed from the *Athanasians*; that such a Generation from the divine Substance, was a thing impossible: and it was premature to explain *how* or in what manner the generation was effected; before it was proved that there was any such thing. That a Son included a division from the Substance, from which it was generated, in the very idea of it;

(g) See the Letter of *Arius* to Bishop *Alexander*, in the Append. No. I.

(b) *Niceph. lib. viii. c. 22.*

and consequently it was inconsistent with the divine Incorruptibility, or ἀφθαρσία, to suppose it. And this was the argument used by the *Sabellians*, who were *homöousians* in the strictest sense; that if the Son was so begotten of the Father's Substance, as to be a distinct Substance; there must be necessarily a division of the paternal Essence(*i*). And *Origen*, who was neither *Sabellian* nor *Arian*, argues in the same manner, against *Septimius*; "Some, says he, explain I
 " *came out from God*; to signify I was begotten
 " by God. But this sense of the words will re-
 " quire us to say, that the Son was begotten of
 " the Father's Substance, which was thereby
 " diminished; and, after the Generation of the
 " Son, was without the Substance of the Son,
 " which it had before:" and he asserts, two
 " pages farther on, that the Generation of the
 Son cannot be out of the Father's Substance, without a diminution of the paternal Essence(*k*). And all the *Antihomöousians* argued in the same manner. And it was to avoid being charged with holding this opinion, viz. that the paternal Substance was divided; (which the *Arians* charged upon the *Athanasians*, as the consequence of their Doctrines;) that the Council of

(*i*) *Bulli* op. p. 33. (*k*) Hoc autem postulat ut dicatur genitum fuisse ex Substantia Patris velut minorati, μειωμένης, & carentis Substantia filii postquam genuisset, quam prius habuit. Com. in *Job.* p. 306, 308.

Nice anathematized those who held it: And *Athanasius* calls the argument a Sophism; and endeavours artfully to shift-off the charge upon the *Arians*, as if they held it themselves; because they had objected to it as the consequence of the *homöousian* Doctrine. “Some, says he, “deny the Consubstantiality; and understand “the word *homöousios*, *corporaliter*; as if God “was material and divisible, like Body.”— But however, it must be confessed; that the *Athanasians*, notwithstanding their Anathemas at the end of the *Nicene* Creed, have given their adversaries some handle, from their manner of expressing themselves at other times; as well as its being the unavoidable Consequence of the *Homöousian* Doctrine, to believe they had some notion of Body in the divine Essence; though they did not allow of the Consequences, which were charged upon their principles; viz. that Communication of Substance implies Division of Substance; for the *divisibility* of the Divine Substance was denied by all parties. However, the *Athanasians* sometimes say, the generation of the Son was a communication of Substance, a derivation, a production; as a tree from its root, the river from the fountain, the ray from the Sun, or light from light (1): all which are similitudes taken from *material*

(1) *Bulli* op. p. 34.

objects,

objects, or body; and convey the Idea of Division.

But the *Atbanasians* were not the first who spake in this manner. *Origen* says of Christ, that God has communicated his magnitude to him; that, as he is the image of the invisible God, he may preserve the image of the Father in regard to magnitude: for he would not be a proportionate and beautiful image; unless he exhibited the image of his magnitude^(m). He is less than the Father originally, says Bishop *Bull*; but equal in magnitude: and again; *tantus est filius, quantus est pater Deus*⁽ⁿ⁾. And he says of *Irenæus*; The holy man, as in a rapture, (*mente subito quasi volatu in sublime evectâ*) sees God to be so great a Lover of Proportion; that he was not willing a *measure* of himself should be wanting, by which his infinity and immensity should be *as it were* circumscribed: which he confirms by this famous and notable saying of a certain Catholic writer; “The immense Father himself is measured in his Son; for the Son is the measure of the Father, because he contains him.” And *Greg. Thaum.* tells us, in the same unintelligible Style; that God the Father surrounds himself by his Son. The word is *ἐκπεριέχει*^(o).

Now all these expressions have an immediate relation to bodily Substance; and might easily

^(m) *Bull* op. 262.

⁽ⁿ⁾ *Ib.* 263.

^(o) *Ib.* 79.
mislead

mislead men, with regard to the *Athanasian* principles; as they did *Ruffinus* and others, with regard to *Origen*; whom they looked-upon as an *Anthropomorphite*(*p*). But this ought not to occasion any dispute; because the *Athanasians* never mean'd that such expressions should be taken in a strict philosophical sense; but only used them as elucidations, to make themselves the better understood. What the *Arians* and *Athanasians* differed upon, was the Nature of the divine Substance; which was allowed by all parties to be indivisible and immaterial: And the question to be solved, was merely a question in Philosophy, viz. whether the divine Substance *generates*; or whether Generation of Substance, material or immaterial, necessarily implies *Division*.—Of these questions the Scripture informs us nothing; they are beyond the confines of Revelation, and can only be discussed by arguments drawn from Philosophy; as *Eusebius* seems to allow, when speaking of the word *homöousios*, as explained by *Constantine*, he says; “In this manner our wise religious Prince philosophised upon these Subjects(*q*).” And accordingly Dr. *Whitby* asks the following questions—

1. Where hath the Scripture said, that the individual Essence of the Father hath been communicated to the Son or Holy Ghost; or

(*p*) *Dupin*, 135. (*q*) *Niceph.* lib. VIII. c. 22.

that

that they derive the same individual Essence from the Essence of the Father; or have the same individual Essence with him; and so are the same God?

2. Where hath the Scripture said, that the Son proceedeth from the Father, by a necessary Emanation; or by an eternal Production within the Essence of the Father?

3. Where hath the Scripture said, that three Persons can exist in one numerical Essence(r)? &c.

It is certain, that none of these questions are determined in the Scripture; and therefore can only be discussed from Principles of Reason or Philosophy.

In like manner the present question I am considering concerning the antemundane Generation of *Jesus Christ*, is no where explained in Scripture; and yet the Christians have written a great deal about it; and accounted for it, upon different principles of Philosophy; according to their own fancies. Sometimes we are told; that the eternal Generation of Christ means his Coexistence with the Father from Eternity; sometimes, *that* by which he was *produced* and *received his existence*; [τὸ εἶναι, upon the principle of *Athenagoras* τὸ δὲ ἐ γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ εἶναι.] sometimes *that* by which he received his *Substance*, as the *Logos*; or *that* by which he

(r) *Whitby's Last Thoughts*, p. 29.

was begotten into a Son, after his existence as an Attribute; sometimes his Manifestation to create; and sometimes it is said to mean, that he is always generating and generated; like Light from the Sun. And as the Christians argue sometimes from one of these notions, and sometimes from another; they have made the whole system taken together to be a heap of Inconsistency and Contradiction.

Bishop *Bull*, speaking of the Generation of Christ, defines it to be *that*, by which, *as the Word* of God, he was born of the Mind of the Father from Eternity(s): or, as he says in another place from *Athanasius*, his first nativity or Generation was *that*, by which *as the Word* he *existed* from *Eternity* of the Father, and with the Father; as being the *coeternal offspring* of the *eternal mind* of the Father. This, he says, is the only proper Nativity of the Son; by which he is the *Word* of God, and *God(t)*. And on account of this Nativity, *Athanasius* supposes, as we are told by Bishop *Bull*, that the Son is called in Scripture the *only begotten*; and that the Son is *of* the Father only because he receives *from* the Father the beginning and

(s) *Qua, ut Logos, ex mente Patris, ab æterno natus fuit.*
Bulli op. p. 100.

(t) *Qua, ut Logos, ab æterno ex patre & apud Patrem existit; utpote æternæ mentis paternæ coeterna Progenies. Hæc sola est τὸ Λόγος, qua Dei Logos, & Deus est, vera & proprie dicta Nativitas.*

original of his *Substance*(u): and in another place he says; that the true and proper Generation of any person or thing is that by which it is *made* or *produced*(x). So that, according to these definitions, 1. Christ as the Word of God was coeternal with the eternal Mind of which he was the offspring.—2. And he was called the only begotten, and the Son; because he received from the Father the *beginning* and origin of his *Substance*; and 3. his Generation was that, by which he was *brought into Being*.—It will be no easy matter to reconcile these three accounts; especially, if it be considered as the general opinion of the Fathers, and the particular opinion of *Athanasius*; that Christ existed, *before* he was begotten into a *Substance*.

Dr. *Waterland* does not seem to agree with Bishop *Bull*, though equally Orthodox; for whereas the Bishop tells us, the first Generation of the Son was *that* by which he *was born*, was the *offspring*, was *produced*, had the *beginning* and origin of his *Substance*, as an eternal offspring, &c. Dr. *Waterland* says; he was *in* the Father, *before* he was generated; and *this* was the most proper Filiation or Generation;

(u) *Ob hanc Nativitatem τὸν μονογενῆ in Scripturis dici ipsum censuit Athanasius; qui et eo solo nomine existimavit filium esse ἐν πατρὶ; hoc est, ex Patre initium & originem substantiæ suæ traxisse. P. 232.*

(x) *Vera & propria Rei vel Personæ cujuscumque generatio ea sola est dicenda, qua illa γίνεται, sive producitur. P. 107.*

X x x x x

and

and *this* he supposes to have been a mere *Coexistence*, and not any *Derivation*. But it is difficult to conceive, how his *Coexistence* with the Father could be a *Filiation*; or how he could be a *Son*, *before* he was begotten.

The expression which the Bishop uses, that the Son existed *eternally* with the Father; (I suppose he means as the Attribute of Wisdom) seems to agree with Dr. *Waterland's* notion of a *Coexistence*: but this was never called a *Generation*, by any of the Fathers; and the Bishop expresses himself fully against this opinion, by declaring with *Athanasius*, that the first Generation was a *Production*.

Now, if Dr. *Waterland's* notion be true, that there was *no Production* or *Derivation* in the Generation of the Son, but merely a *Coexistence*; the *Father* might as well be called the *Son*, on account of his *Coexistence* with the *Logos*; as the *Logos*, on account of his *Coexistence* with the *Father*: Indeed, we have no reason to imagine, that Dr. *Waterland* would be at all shocked at the consequence; because he confesses, that he sees no *Impossibility* why the Father might not be the Son; and the Son the Father(y): and all those who inform us of a *private Council* of the *Trinity* before the world began, in which the *Oeconomy* of the three

(y) See *Philaleth. Cantab.* p. 46. and Part. II. p. 12, 19.—*Waterland's* Def. p. 177.

persons was settled by agreement; may think in the same manner. But others, who consider the nature of *necessary* and *unoriginate* existence; and that the Father must be *necessarily* what he is, or *not be at all*; will see, that it may be concluded from such premises; that it is only a *chance*, that there happens to be either a Father or Son(z); and, as neither of them could exist by *chance*, neither of them could exist at all; and there would be no necessarily existent Being; nor any other.

But farther; If this Generation be only a *Coexistence*, as Dr. *Waterland* supposes, and not a *Derivation* or *Production*; then there must be two *unoriginate*, and consequently two *self-existent* Beings: or two *Gods*. For *Athanasius* truly observes, τὸ συνπαρχόν, &c. omne coexistens non sibi, sed alteri coexistit(a): nothing can be *coexistent* with *itself*; but with *another*. And if this be the consequence of Dr. *Waterland's* opinion, it must be false; and it should seem that the Son of God must be, as Bishop *Bull* asserts, a *Production*; and then his first Generation will not be merely a *Coexistence*, as Dr. *Waterland* supposes; but an *Origination*, by which he received his Existence: τὸ ἀπὸ εἶναι, as *Damascen* expresses it(b): and his Generation will be that quâ ἐγένετο by which he received

(z) Letter I. p. 131.

(a) *Whitby* Disq. mod. p.

52.

(b) De Orthod. Fid. c. x.

the beginning and origin of his Existence; as Bishop *Bull* says.

But this opinion of Bishop *Bull* is liable to some Objections; the first of which arises from his calling the Son a *Coeternal* offspring: and affirming that he was with God from eternity.— But by this the Bishop may perhaps mean no more; than that the divine Substance was eternal; from which the Son was generated; as the *Platonists* called their inferior Gods *eternal*, because they were supposed to be formed out of the eternal *Psyche*; and so eternal as to their Substance, though not as to their personal Existence(c): as when the Apostle says of *Levi*, that he was in the Loins of his Father (*Abraham*), when *Melchisedek* met him(d); or he might mean *eternal*, as it is explained by *Chrysostom* and others to signify existence before time was measured by days and hours: but he could not mean, that *Christ* had no beginning; because he declares in direct words, that the Father alone is God of himself; and the Son is of God, or *from* God; and had from Him the beginning of his Substance, and was produced: for which reason, he says, the ancients did not scruple to call the Father the *one and only* God; because he is the *beginning, cause, author, and fountain* of the Son(e).—It is therefore most probable; that, when the Bishop

(c) Let. I. p. 158. (d) Heb. vii. 10. (e) *Bulli*
op. p. 232.

uses this apparent Contradiction, viz. a *coeternal offspring*, he considers *Christ* according to the notion of the Fathers and Council of Nice, as the eternal *Word* or *Attribute of Wisdom* existing in the divine mind and *coeternal* with it; and afterwards generated into a *Substantial Being*. And this seems to be the reason, that the Bishop expresses himself so precisely; UT LOGOS *natus fuit*; and *Athanasius* says, that by his Generation he received the beginning [not of his Existence, but] of his Substance. And it is from the same principle that *Eusebius* says; “the Emperor *Constantine* proved, with
 “respect even to the *divine Generation*, that the
 “*Word* had a *prior existence* before all ages:
 “for as much as, *before* his *actual* Generation,
 “he was *potentially* in the Father, in an *unbe-*
 “*gotten* manner; the Father having been
 “always Father, as also always King, and
 “always Saviour, and potentially all things,
 “always similar and without any change(*f*).”

And

(*f*) Καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐνθιον αὐτῆς γέννησιν τὸ πρὸ πάντων αἰώνων εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐπεὶ καὶ πρὶν ἐνεργείᾳ γεννηθῆναι δυναμει ἢ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ἀγεννήτως, ὅντος τῷ πατρὶ αἰεὶ. *Euseb. Epist. ad Eccles. Cæs. apud Theod. lib. I. c. 12.* Here we see to demonstration; that, when the Fathers speak of an *eternal* Generation, they do not use the word *Eternal* to mean a strict philosophical Eternity; but merely a Generation before all time. For they call the Generation of *Christ eternal*; and yet allow, that he was *potentially* in the Father, in an *unbegotten* manner,

And this was the opinion of *Athenagoras*, *Theophilus*, *Clemens Alex.* *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and others; and involves the subject in innumerable difficulties(g).

What the Fathers in general believed of this matter is perfectly agreeable to the philosophy of the Platonists; that the *eternal Wisdom* of the Father, that Attribute by which God himself is wise, (which the Platonists called *Αὐτοσοφία*, and *Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος*, the *internal Word* or Reason(b),) was *begotten into a Son*, and became the *Λόγος προφορικός*, the *external Word* or Reason; being sent forth by God, when he created the world. Thus *Athenagoras* and *Tatian* speak of a Son that was in God in Idea and Power, unbegotten, and unsubstantial, before his actual

manner, before he was generated:—In the same unphilosophical and lax sense, *Eusebius* calls the Angels *ἄγγελοι*, &c. *Whitby* Disq. mod. Lect. xxix, xxx. Whereas the word *Eternal* in a strict sense excludes the Existence of any thing before it; and can therefore only properly belong to the one Self-existent and Unoriginate God: So that if Christ was the Attribute of Wisdom, he was *properly* *Eternal*: but his Generation afterwards is *improperly* called *Eternal*.

(g) This dispute, whether the Father was Father before he had a Son, was afterwards renewed with such violence between *Dorotheus* and *Marinus*, that the Multitude divided: *Dorotheus* remained in his Church; and new ones were built for the followers of *Marinus*. *Niceph.* lib. XII. c. 36.

(b) *Cudworth*, Int. Sys. 575.

Existence

Existence as a Person; just as the Platonists spake of the *World*, which they called the Son of God; as being both created and eternal: sometimes considering it as the ideal World, existing always in the divine mind; and sometimes as sent forth into real Existence⁽ⁱ⁾: not considering, that what exists in the divine mind only in Idea, hath no existence at all; the Idea indeed exists, but the thing itself does not. So that the *Logos* could not possibly be a real Son, till he was begotten.

Eusebius on the contrary speaks of the *Logos*, as being *always* with the Father, *as a Son*: and *Theodoret* says, he was *always* in the Father in an *unbegotten* manner^(k): but surely, if it was in an *unbegotten* manner; it was *not* as a Son: and yet *Arius* mentions somewhere a much stronger expression, which is used by the *Athanasians*; viz. that he was *unbegotten*, and *begotten in an unbegotten manner*. *Ingenitus est, ingenite genitus est*. *Tertullian* on the contrary says, that God was not *always* a Father; and that there was a time, when the Son was *not*^(l)—that the internal wisdom of God was begotten and made into a Person, just before the Creation of the World; that the Word, which he distinguishes from Reason, was not from the beginning; but

(i) *Ibid.* 254.—*Whitby* Dis. mod. 56. (k) *Theod.* Eccles. Hist. lib. I. c. 12.—*Essay on Spirit*, 145.

(l) *Adv. Herm.* c. 3.

the divine Reason was before it; *quia non Sermonalis a principio, sed Rationalis Deus etiam ante Principium(m).*—*Novatian* declares expressly; that the *Procession* of the Son, which was done when it pleased God; that is, when he would create the World, was what made the Son a *Second Person*. And most of the Fathers tell us; that, *before* the Word was generated, it was in the *heart* of God, in the *womb* of his understanding, in his *bowels*; from whence it came forth, as from its bud and seed(n). *Theophilus* says; God having his Word internally in his bowels, begat him (o): and again, he begat him externally; who was internally in his heart(p). And so *Athanasius*; what is of or from the Father? except the Word which cometh forth from his heart, and is born out of his belly (q)? And *Dupin* says, the Fathers declare, that the Word is eternal; and was from all eternity in God; as his Council, his Wisdom, and his Word(r).

Bishop *Bull* acknowledges *Athenagoras* to mean; that the Son is the *same* in respect to the *Father*; as the *internal Reason* is to the *Mind*

(m) *Adv. Prax. c. 5.* (n) *Le Platon. dévoil. c. xiii.*

(o) ἔχων ἐν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἐαυτοῦ Λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἐγέννησεν αὐτόν. *Ad Autol. 81.*

(p) ἐνδιάθετον ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἐγέννησε προφύρικτον.

(q) τί δὲ ἐστὶν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, εἰ μὴ ὁ Λόγος, ὁ ἐκ καρδίας προελθὼν, καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ γεννηθείς. *Athan. tom. I. p. 539.—Bull, 208.*

(r) *Dupin Bib. in verbo Theophilus.*

of man. And *Suffridas*, the learned Commentator upon *Athenagoras*, freely confesses; that this Author meant by the Son's being the *Word*, that he was the *rational Faculty* of God the Father; and, *as such*, was unbegotten and coeternal with him: because the Father was never any more *without* his Reason, than a living Creature is *without* Life(s). And Dr. *Whitby* observes it to have been the common opinion of the *Antenicene* Fathers, that the Word or Son of God was always *in* the Father, and *coexisted* with him *internally*; because the Father was always λογικὸς that is, *rational(t)*.—The same was clearly the Opinion of Bishop *Alexander*, in his letter against *Arius*; in which he argues for the absolute Eternity of the *Word*, as follows; “If the Son be the *Word* and the “*Wisdom* of the Father; how can there be a “Time, when he was not? for it is the same “as to say, that there was a time when God “was both without his *Wisdom* and his “*Word(u)*.”

It appears from hence; that the *Homöousians* were quite at a loss, how to explain their own System; in which they differed as much from one another, as they did from the *Arians*. They all agreed; that the Son existed before

(s) Reply to Dr. *Waterland's* Def. 108, 283.

(t) *Whitby* Disq. mod. p. 127.

(u) *Socrat. Eccl. Hist. lib. I.*

his generation, some how or other; and thereby contradicted their own definitions, that the generation of any thing is that, *qua γίνεσθαι* by which it receives its Existence; and again, τὸ ὄν ἐ γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ ὄν. One says, he existed in *Idea* and *Power*; another says, as a *Son*: the Emperor and *Theodoret* say; *potentially*, in an *unbegotten* manner; which seems to mean *not as a Son*: and yet the Emperor says, the Father was *always* Father: and if so, the Son must have been *always* the Son,—*Tertullian*, *Novatian*, and *Athanasius* are express, that he existed *prior* to his generation; but *not* as a *Son*: some say, as the *divine Wisdom*; *Tertullian* says, as the *divine Wisdom Tacitly exerted in Thought* (x); &c. But that an unchangeable Being should exist *one while* as the unsubstantial Wisdom of the Father, and *afterwards* be generated into a Substantial Being distinct from the Person of the Father; seems to be a Contradiction: and it is as inconceivable, in what Sense an *Attribute* can be *generated* into a Substantial Being; as how a Substantial Being can be generated out of length, breadth, and thickness; and a Trinity of Substances be formed out of the properties of a Cube. However this is the divinity of the Fathers; in order to oppose the doctrine of *Arius*, that the generation of Christ was the *beginning* of his Existence; which was looked-upon as Heresy in

(x) Adv. Prax. c. 5.

Arius, though allowed to be orthodox in his opposers(y).

But here we meet with farther difficulties; for if the opinion of these Fathers be true, that the *Reason* of God or his *Word* was the eternal Faculty of the Father; and came forth from the bowels of his Understanding, &c. how is this consistent with what is said, that the Father was never *without* his Word or Reason? Is not this to say, as Bishop *Alexander* accuses *Arius*, that there was a time when God was not wise; as Being without his Wisdom or his Word(z). Or did the *Word* go forth from the womb of his Understanding, and continue *in it* all the while? I answer; the Fathers speak of this in such a manner, that it is impossible to know what they mean. *Dupin* tells us, that the Word did go forth somehow; *en quelque maniere*: Bishop *Bull* says; *quasi, even as it were*: and explains the opinion of *Theophilus* to be, that he came forth from the divine mind; without being *separated* from it(a). And this, he tells us, is the Catholic Faith. And, if this be the Truth, whenever we read that Christ or the Holy Ghost

(y) *Austin* says, Plerumque dicit Christus, dedit mihi Pater; in quo vult intelligi quod eum genuerit Pater; non ut tanquam jam *existanti* & non *habenti* dederit aliquid; sed ipsum dedisse ut haberet, genuisse ut ESSET. De Trin. lib. I. c. 12. And *Damascen* says, πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἔχει ὁ υἱός, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα, ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχει, καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι.. De Orthod. Fid. c. x. (z) *Bull*, 216. (a) *Ibid*. 231.

proceeded and *came forth* from the Father(*b*), we are to understand, it was only *quasi*, and not in *reality*. It is somewhat remarkable however, that when *Christ* saith, I came forth from the Father, and came into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father(*c*); that his disciples said to him, now speakest thou *plainly*; and speakest no Proverb.—But *surely* never words were *less* plain, or *more utterly unintelligible*; if *Christ* was never *separate* from the Father: and he neither came into this world, nor departed out of it *personally*; but only *quasi*, and ἐν ἐνεργείᾳ, as Bishop *Bull* speaks of it(*d*).

Eusebius says; the power of the Word, even when it descended from the Father, continued in the Father(*e*): so that a *demission* from and *Descent* of the Son from the Father is supposed to be consistent, according to the Fathers, with his abiding *inseparably* in the Father all the time of his demission or coming down from the Father; and in the same manner, his *Wisdom* or *Word* came forth from the Father; by continuing where it was before.

(*b*) *John* viii. 42. xv. 26.

(*c*) *Ibid.* xvi. 28, 29.

(*d*) Bishop *Bull* says, *quasi progressio*, 230. and *quasi exivisse*, 232. and *tanquam ex utero exivit* καὶ ἐνεργείαν, 100.

(*e*) *Verbi Virtutem, etiam dum ita se demittit, perfectissime & proxime cum Deo Patre conversari, intraque ipsum manentem ineffabilis [ineffabiliter] ejus arcanis perfrui.* Bull, p. 231.

Another

Another difficulty seems to be this; that if the going forth from God the Father, was no *real Separation*; such as is included in the Idea of a Son; but only *quasi progressio*; the generation will be only *quasi generatio*, which means we know not what(*f*). The great *Basil* indeed, as quoted by Bishop *Bull*, tells us boldly; that a *Conjunction* and *Disjunction* at the same time are very consistent; though it can neither be explained in words, nor conceived in our thoughts(*g*). And so the Edict of the Emperor *Justin* runs, when he speaks of the Trinity; that it is *indivisibly-divided* and *divisibly-conjoined*(*h*). And *Gregory Thaumaturgus* expresses it in a like manner, according to the Translation in the notes upon *Nicephorus*; *distinguitur inseparabiliter*; and *coagmentatur inseparabiliter*(*i*). But these answers gave but little Satisfaction to the *Arians*.—

I observed of *Eusebius*, that he says; the Word was always with the Father, *as a Son*; even before he was begotten: If this were certain, the difficulty just mentioned would be sufficiently obviated; as there would be no ne-

(*f*) Corpus quid sit, Sanguis quid sit, intelligo: *quasi* Corpus & *quasi* Sanguis quid sit, nullo modo intelligo. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. I. 1.* (*g*) Nescio quæ in istis animadvertitur, quæ neque *explicari verbis, nec mente comprehendendi potest, Communio pariter & Disjunctio.* (*h*) *Euag. B. V. c. 4.* (*i*) *Niceph. lib. I. c. 2. note.*

cessity of going forth from the Father, to become a Son: for if the Father was Father, before he begat; the Son must be a Son, before he was begotten.—But here we meet with another objection from *Eunomius*; that if the Son existed, *as a Son*, before he was begotten;] he was *unbegotten*: and consequently *unoriginate*: And, if so, he could not receive his origin from the Father; nor be an *Offspring*, or a *Son*, or a *Production* from the eternal mind. And this objection drives us back again into the opinion of *Dr. Waterland*; that the generation of the Son was merely a *Coexistence*(*k*). But this has been already exploded: because it supposes two unoriginate or self-existent Beings; and consequently two Gods: for one Being cannot exist with itself but with another; as *Athanasius* justly observes. And *Justin Martyr* says, the Son is ἕτερος ἀριθμῶ, *alter numero*, and consequently not unoriginate. And therefore, either *Eusebius* was mistaken; in supposing the Word to be a Son, before he was begotten; and the Emperor *Constantine* in supposing that God was *always* Father; even before he had begotten a Son; or else Bishop *Bull* and the Fathers he espouses were mistaken; in supposing his *Generation* to be that *Production*, *quâ ἐγένετο* by which he received his Existence. But if it is allowed; that *Generation*, whatever be the meaning of it, is

(*k*) P: 1076. of this Chapter.

necessary to the being of a Son; then *Eusebius's* opinion (that he existed before he was begotten) must be false: and the Bishop's opinion must be so far true; viz. that his Generation was a *Production*; and by this Production he received his Origin; and not only became a Son, but *began to be*; as *Au'stin* and *Damasceus* assert(*l*).—I shall conclude this Chapter with the words of Dr. *Whitby*, which I think must appear undeniably true to any one that reads them. “This only
 “I insist on, says the Doctor, that the Contro-
 “versies concerning the holy Trinity, disputed
 “with the greatest Acrimony and Contention
 “on both Sides, [and particularly the Subject
 “of this Chapter] cannot be certainly deter-
 “mined by the writings of the Fathers, the
 “decrees of Councils, or plain doctrines of
 “Universal Tradition: nor is any thing to be
 “believed or safely asserted; but what can be
 “proved plainly and clearly from the holy
 “Scriptures(*m*).”—Whereas in consulting the
 Opinions of the Fathers, we meet with nothing
 but Darkness, Contradiction, and Confusion;
 like the description which *Ovid* has given us of
 the Chaos—

“Obstabatque aliis aliud; quia Corpore in uno
 “Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia ficcis,
 “Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus.”

(*l*) Cum *Tryph.* 380.—*Whitby*, 86.
Dis. Med. Præf. p. 111.

(*m*) *Whitby*

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Sense of the word Production, and whether the Generation of the Son was a literal Generation.

HAVING in the last Chapter examined and compared the different opinions of the learned Christians relative to the antemundane generation of the Son of God; I shall venture to reject the notion of Dr. *Waterland*, that it was merely a *Coexistence*; as being already fully answered: and go on to consider the opinion of Bishop *Bull* and the Fathers he espouses; that it was a *Production*.—And examine first, whether this *Production* was a proper and literal, or only a figurative Generation.

The word *Production* may be understood in two different Senses. A thing may either be produced from nothing; that is, *created*; in which sense the generation of the Son was understood by *Arius*: or it may be produced from something præexistent, as the *Platonists* believed their inferior Gods to be created or produced out of the præexistent *Psyche*(a). And in this latter sense Bishop *Bull*, Bishop *Pearson*, and the *Nicene* Fathers understood that Christ

(a) Let. I. p. 158.

was produced *out of the eternal Essence* of the Father; *ex propria Dei Substantia*. And instead of always using the word *Production* they explain themselves sometimes by other words; which are not liable to the same uncertainty. Bishop Bull speaks also, with other learned men, of *internal Production*; which I shall take notice of elsewhere.

Bishop Pearson says; “the *Communication* of
 “the *divine Essence* by the Father, is the *true*
 “and *proper Generation*; by which he hath be-
 “gotten a Son. A Son is nothing but *another*,
 “produced by his Father; of the *same Nature*
 “with him: but God the Father hath *commu-*
 “nicated to the Word the *same* divine Essence,
 “by which he is God(*b*).” And again, “the
 “Father hath the *same Attributes and Essence* of
 “himself; and the Son, by *Communication* from
 “the Father(*c*).” (Is the Son then unoriginate,
 “unbegotten, and self-existent; as the Father
 “is?) And Bishop Bull says; what else does it
 “mean to be *generated*; but to be *born from*
 “another into a *Similitude* of Nature? Where-
 “fore it is necessary that he who is begotten
 “should have *that Nature* by communication
 “from him; that in it he may *resemble* the Be-
 “getter (*d*)?” [If he *resembles* him in Essence,
 how

(b) Pearson, 137.

(c) Ibid.

(d) Quid est aliud generari quam nasci ex altero in Similitudinem Naturæ; quare necesse est Naturam ab illa

how can he be the *same* Essence : and if the *same* Essence, how can he be *another* ?]

Now if these definitions of a Son, and his generation from the Father's Substance, be just and precise ; it seems to follow, that the Holy Ghost is the *Son* of God ; as well as the *Logos* : for both the Son and the Holy Ghost are supposed to proceed from the Father, by *Communication of Essence* ; which, we are told, is the *true* and *proper* Generation. And Bishop Pearson, to make good his Hypothesis quotes the following words of our Saviour ; I proceeded and came forth from God : neither came I of myself, but my Father sent me (*e*) ; and argues, that this *procession* of the Son is mean'd *by way of Generation* : and afterwards the Bishop quotes these other words of Christ ; when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father ; he shall testify of me (*f*) : and He interprets these words, in the same arbitrary manner, to relate to the *Procession* of the Holy Ghost from the Father's Substance (*g*). And from hence I argue ; that, if Generation be nothing more than *Communication of Substance*, according to these definitions, and the Bishop's

Communicatione habeat ille qui gignitur, ut ea gignenti sit similis. *Bull*, p. 255. But surely no man ever thought that *Generari* and *Nasci* had the same sense.

(*e*) *John* viii. 42. (*f*) *John* xv. 26. (*g*) *Pearson*
p. 323.

inter-

interpretation of these Texts; the *procession* of the Holy Ghost must be as much a *generation*, as the *procession* of the Son.

I call these interpretations arbitrary; because there is no good reason to think, that these texts relate to the *origination* either of Son or Spirit; but merely to their *Mission*, or being sent forth by God upon the Gospel dispensation; and there is not one of the Texts which the Bishop refers to in this argument, (viz. because they were *sent*, because the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of *God*, and the Spirit of *Christ*, which was in the Prophets;) which relates at all to their antemundane *Generation*. The right of Mission, from which he argues, has nothing to do with Communication of Essence—and the proceeding from God, as sent upon a ministerial office, is very different from a Procession *out of his Substance*. An Ambassador is *sent* by a Prince, and receives of him what to say; but he does not therefore receive his *Essence* from the Prince's *Substance*: in short, the Bishop has not in these pages a single Text to support him. And when he endeavours to prove, that the Holy Ghost is not a Son; because he receiveth and glorifies the Son—and that his coming depended upon the departure of the Son—his arguments only amount to a proof, that the Holy Ghost is not the *same* Son: but it is impossible to prove, that he is not a *Son*; as well as the

Zzzzzz 2

Logos;

Logos; as long as it is admitted, that *Generation* signifies only *Communication of Substance*; and that the Holy Ghost received *Communication of Substance*, as well as the *Logos*.

To this objection the Bishop finds himself unable to answer, without giving up his definition; and supposing the Sonship of the *Logos* to depend, not upon the *Communication* of the divine Essence, but the *Manner* of it; “the
 “ Word being God by *Generation*, and the
 “ Holy Ghost by *Procession*(*b*).” So that he first lays it down, that *Communication* of Substance or Essence is the *true* and *proper* Generation, by which the Father hath begotten a Son; and then says, in direct contradiction to it; that a person *so generated* may be *no* Son; because the Communication is not made by *Generation*, but *Procession*.—Let us see, in what manner he explains this difference; and endeavours to shew, that the Generation he speaks of, is not *merely a Communication* of Substance.
 “ *Eve*, he says, was produced out of *Adam* in
 “ the *same Nature* with him, and yet was *not*
 “ born of him; nor was she truly the daughter
 “ of *Adam*: whereas *Seth*, proceeding from the
 “ *same Person* in similitude of the *same Nature*,
 “ was truly and properly the Son of *Adam*. And
 “ this difference, he says, was not in the *Na-*
 “ *ture* produced; but in the *Manner* of pro-

(*b*) *Pearson*, 241.

“ *duction*;

“duction; *Eve* descending not from *Adam* as
 “*Seth* did, by way of *Generation*; i. e. natural
 “fecundity(i).”

The plain truth, which the bishop does not choose to give us in this place, is this: that in one case, there was an *act* of *Generation* between *male* and *female*; which is *absolutely necessary*, according to all language, to the *existence* of a *Son* or a *Daughter*; and in the other case, there was no such *act*: and consequently, no *Son* or *Daughter* was produced—and in this *literal* sense of *Generation* the Bishop fully explains himself, when he is speaking of the generation of the *Son* by the Holy Ghost of the virgin *Mary*; and says, “If the Ancients
 “speak thus, it is not to be understood as if
 “the Spirit did perform any *proper act* of gene-
 “ration; such as is the *foundation* of Pater-
 “nity.” Here it appears; that, in the Bishop’s opinion, in order to become a *Father*, some *proper act* of *Generation* must be performed; such as is the *foundation* of *Paternity*: to which gross intimation it is sufficient to answer; that, if we have any idea at all to our words; there can be no *such generation* possible; with regard to the present question. For *Generation*, properly so called, including an *act* of *Paternity*, is very *different* from a *mere Production*; and supposes the *Society* of *male* and *female*: but

(i) *Ibid.* 166.

with regard to the Generation of the *Son*, there can be no room for any such supposition; and consequently, the *literal* Generation of the Son is *impossible*: and the difference in the *manner* of communicating the divine Essence to the Son by *generation*: and to the Holy Ghost by *procession*, entirely excluded. And, in like manner, all the comparisons and allusions which are used by the *Athanasians*, as of a tree derived from its root, a river from its fountain, a light from the Sun, extend no farther than to explain that the Son of God may be a *derivation* or *production* (in which sense Bishop Bull explains *Generation* and *Nativity* as having the same meaning): but these comparisons by no means relate to him as a *literal Son*, by such a *proper act* of Generation as is the *foundation* of Paternity, and distinguishes the Origination of the Son from that of the Holy Ghost: which indeed is an Idea too gross to be indulged. And yet, if Christ be not a Son in that *strict* and *gross* sense—the word *Son of God*, when applied to the *Logos*, cannot possibly be mean'd in a *literal* but in a *figurative* sense; either as the word may mean merely to express *Production* or *Origination*, as it is used by *Tertullian* and *Athanasius*, quoted in the beginning of the seventh Chapter: or as it means a *designation* to a particular Office; as the word *ἐκκλησιάρχης* in *Prov. viii. 22.* is explained by *Eusebius*.—The author
of

of the *Recognitions* denies, that the Holy Ghost may be called a Son; because, he says, there is but one *ungenerated*; and but one *generated*: the Holy Ghost being made by One who was also made(*k*). But this reason, if it were true, would prove; that the *Logos* was no more a *literal Son*, than the *Holy Ghost*; for, as it is observed by *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia* in his Letter to *Paulinus* Bishop of *Tyre*, *what is made* cannot be of the divine Substance, which is *self-existent*; but must be created(*l*).

CHAPTER IX.

Whether the Son of God was a Production from the Father's Substance; and whether his Generation was effected by a Communication of the Paternal Substance; and whether the divine Substance be steril or prolific.

HAVING in the last Chapter shewn the absurdity of supposing Christ to be the Son of God by such a *proper Generation*, as is the *foundation* of Paternity; I shall now consider the opinion, which is nearest to it in a literal sense; viz. whether he was a *Production out of the Father's Substance*, according to the similitudes in which it is represented by the *Athanasians*; as a

(*k*) Lib. III. c. ii.(*l*) Niceph. lib. viii. c. x.

tree from its root, a river from its fountain, &c. none of which extend to any *act of Paternity*, but merely to a *Production*.

Bishop *Pearson* says; a Son is nothing, but another *produced* by his Father, of the *same* Nature with him: and that God has *communicated* to the Son the same divine *Essence*, by which he is God. And Bishop *Bull* says, from *Petavius*; that a *Generation* cannot be conceived, without a *Communication* of something; and that *Communication* can only be of *Nature*, *Essence*, or *Substance*; because it is a *Substantial Production*(a). To this it is answered; that a *Generation* of the divine *Substance* is impossible: because the same [thing or] *Substance* cannot beget (or produce or be communicated to) itself(b). Wherefore as the *Essence* of the three Persons is allowed to be *the same*; the *Essence* cannot beget the *Essence*: to which argument Bishop *Bull* opposes the words of *Melancthon*; that the same, as far as it is *incommunicable*, does not *beget itself*; but the *same* that is *communicable* is communicable to the begotten: but *Essence is communicable*; and therefore is communicable to the begotten.

(a) Neque enim generatio sine alicujus rei Communicatione potest animo concipi: porro non alterius quam Naturæ, Essentiæ, & Substantiæ: cum sit ἐσιώδης, id est, substantialis productio. *Bulli op.* 255.

(b) Idem ipsum non gignit; quare cum Essentia sit eadem, non potest Essentia gignere Essentiam. *Ibid.* 256.

Now

Now it is allowed; that *Essence*, that is, all *finite* Essence is communicable; either in whole or in part: though it is absurd to suppose, it can beget or produce itself; whether it be communicable or not. But the divine Essence is communicable *neither way*. An *individual* Essence, says Dr. *Whitby*, cannot be communicated; for that very reason, because it is *individual*; that is, *one* and *no more*: but supposing there is any thing in the divine Nature capable of being communicated, (which is absurd to imagine for another reason also, viz. because it is *unchangeable*;) I would then ask, to *whom* or to *what* could the Communication be made; when as yet *nothing* but the divine Essence *existed*? For, “until the generation of
 “the Son of God, God was *alone*; being to
 “himself both world and place and all things:
 “*So alone*, that there was nothing external to
 “him;” says *Tertullian*(c). The divine Nature therefore could not be communicated to any *other* Being, or *second* Person; because *no other Being* or Person existed, except the God and Father of the universe; and a communication of his own Substance to himself could not be possible.

This seems to have been the reason, which drove the Council of *Nice* to maintain; that the Son of God existed, as the Attribute of

(c) *Tertul. adv. Prax. c. 5.*

Wisdom, *before* he was begotten; or *before* the communication of Essence was made: that there might be something *præexisting* to which it might be communicated. And accordingly, *Athanasius* declares; that, whoever asserts the *Son was not before he was begotten*, contradicts the Synod(*d*). So that, according to this System, the generation of the second Person in the Trinity was effected by the Communication of the *divine Substance* to the *divine Attribute* of Wisdom. But this could not really be the case: because the Substance and Attributes of God being always united, the communication of one to the other could be nothing more, than the continuation of the same Union; every thing remaining as it did always: so that if there was but one Person existing before the supposed communication, there would be but one Person after it: and the continuance of every thing as it was before, will no more produce one more Person; than it will produce a thousand.

In short, whatever belongs to the self-existent Being, whether Substance or Attribute, is *self-existent*; being indeed God himself under a particular consideration; as Dr. *Whitby* has observed(*e*): and consequently, never was produced at all. So that the question to be dis-

(*d*) Epist. concerning the *Nicene Council*.—*Cudworth*, 608.

(*e*) Last Thoughts, 19—22.

cussed,

cuffed, as far as the generation of the *divine* Essence is concerned, is not simply whether *Essence* can beget *Essence*, or *Wisdom Wisdom*? which seems to have been the dispute between *Peter Lombard* the Master of the Sentences, and *Richard Victorinus*; but, whether the *same* *Essence* which is *self-existent*, and consequently never was generated or produced, *did beget* or *generate itself*? which does not seem to be very probable. And moreover, if it were possible to produce itself, it would not thereby produce a *second* person distinct and different from the first; but the very *same* numerical Substance, which existed before such a supposed generation.

But Bishop *Pearson* says, we must not look upon the divine Nature as *steril*; but rather admire the *fecundity* and communicability of itself, upon which the creation of the world dependeth(*f*). Here the Bishop's notion of *fecundity* seems to be nothing more than the *power* of creating. Let us observe how he goes on: "but the divine Essence being, by reason
" of its *Simplicity*, not subject to *Division*; and
" in respect of its *Infinity*, incapable of *Multi-*
" *plication*; is so communicated, as not to be
" multiplied(*g*)."
Is not this plainly to confess, that there can be *no fecundity* in the divine Nature?—The Bishop goes-on to prove it:
" infomuch that he, who proceedeth by Com-

(*f*) *Pearson*, 135.(*g*) *Ibid.* 138.

“munication of the divine Substance, hath
“not only the *same* Nature; but is also the
“*same* God(*b*).”—Now if there was from Eternity One Essence: and that One Essence continues *unchangeably the same* One, without any *numerical* increase of Essence; where is the *fecundity* of the divine Essence? certainly there is no such thing. On the contrary, the divine Essence, having received no *numerical* increase, must be steril: But if the Christian Divines are *resolved* to maintain a Fecundity in God, it should not be supposed to be *by generation of Substance*; (which they allow to have been always *one*, without any increase;) but *by generation of Persons*; for then they would have this appearance of Probability at least, that there was only One Person in the Godhead at the first; which was afterwards increased to *Three*. Whereas a Fecundity without an increase in number or quantity, is absolute nonsense.—But then the difficulty would lie here—

1st. If we understand the word *Person*, as we usually do in common discourse, when we speak of three distinct Persons; as it was understood by Archbishop Tillotson, and the Realists; it unavoidably follows, that if each of these be *infinite*, they must be Three distinct Gods; and the generation of the *Son* must be the generation of a *Second God*.

(*b*) *Ibid.* 137.

2. If we suppose the Son to be generated by the Communication of that self-existent Substance, which was *essential to* and *inseparable from* the *Person* of the Father: we must suppose the divine fecundity to consist in the communication of the Father's *Person*, as well as of his *Substance*. So that, to speak nearly, in Bishop *Pearson's* own words; he, who proceedeth by Communication of the divine Substance; must not only be the *same God*, but the *same Person* as the Father: and consequently, the Fecundity will be only imaginary; as there will be no increase either in Substance or Person.

On the other hand, if we understand the word *Persons*, as Bishop *Burnet* and the Nominals do(*i*), not to mean distinct Substances, but only *Characters* or *Properties* of the one self-existent Substance, as explained by *Au'stin* and the Reformed Churches; the divine Fecundity is entirely out of the Question. For neither can the *reflect act* of the divine Understanding or *Intellect* be called with any propriety a *Generation*, and much less a *Substantial* Generation, by which they suppose the Son to be produced; nor can that *Love* supposed to be produced by Intellect and Wisdom, and to become the *Holy Ghost*, be said with any Propriety to be a substantial Production(*k*). For one and the same substance may appear under the Characters of

(*i*) Lett. I. p. 67.

(*k*) *Ibid.* I. p. 215.

Mind, Wisdom, and Love; or of Creator, Redeemer, and Benefactor; or of Light, Counsel, and Life; or of Bounty, Immutability, and Unity; or of Goodness, Knowledge, and Power; or of Life, Understanding, and Will; or of all these together; without any *Generation* or *Fecundity* at all⁽¹⁾. But not one of these can suffer Pain and Death; without the suffering of the Substance, in which the particular Property exists; and by which it is supported.

The considering the *Creation of the Universe*, as that which proves the divine Substance to be prolific and to be a natural Fecundity; and then palming it upon us as a *Generation out of the divine Substance*; is a piece of sophistry, unworthy of Bishop *Pearson*: but he was betrayed into it by *Athanasius*, who argues thus; If the divine Essence be not fruitful, but barren;—as light not enlightening, and a spring that is dry; how is it that they are not ashamed to say, that he has a *creative Power*?—as if Creation from nothing, which was the case of the Universe; was the same thing as a generation from the divine Substance.

In short, it is to no purpose for the Christians to tell us of the divine Fecundity, as to Substance; unless they allow of a *numerical increase* in the divine Substance: which they dare not do: but they go as far as they dare; and much

(1) Let. I. p. 202.

too far, when they speak of God as not being *One in Number*, and as making a Society. When *Gilbert Porretane*, the learned Bishop of *Poitiers*, had asserted, that the three persons were *tria singularia*; the Archbishop of *Nevers* objected, that God should rather be called *unum singulare*, than *tria singularia* (m): at which many were offended; because *Hilary* saith, “As it is *profane* “to say, there are two Gods; so it is also *im-* “*pious* to say, that he is singular or solitary. “[*Singularem & solitarium dicere sacrilegum* “*est.*]”—And Mr. *How*, in the disputes upon the Trinity in the last age has carried this notion farther. He says, “the Persons are dis- “*tinct* numerical Natures, Beings, and Sub- “stances; that there is a variety of individual “Natures in the Deity; that there are in the “Godhead, three distinct intelligent Hyposta- “ses, having each his own distinct, singular, “intelligent Nature; and these three divine “Persons, Beings, Essences, Natures, Substan- “ces, maintain a *delicious Society*. No Enjoy- “ments being pleasant without Consociation “therein. And we must needs think this a “more blessed state, or a more perfect Idea of “Blessedness; than can be conceived in an “eternal Solitude(n).”

(m) *Baxter's Ch. Hist.* p. 383.—*Let. VII.* p. 867.

(n) *Unit. Tracts*, Vol. III. p. 40.

I shall not enter into this Subject: I am only proving, that God is not *prolific*; as to his *Substance*. And this will appear beyond all doubt; when we have considered the only ways, in which such a fecundity can be conceived; and by which the learned Christians in support of their philosophical notions have supposed it to be effected.

Tertullian, the first of the Latin Fathers, understood the *Word* to be a *part* of God; and that God *made* the Son, by bringing him forth *out of himself*(*o*): and that the Father is the *whole* Substance, and the Son a *portion* or *derivation* of or from the whole(*p*). And so *Manichæus* says, that the Son was a consubstantial *part* of the Father(*q*). And, if this could be, it would *make* a Second Person, though *not* of the *same numerical* Substance, yet of the *same kind*, as the rib of *Adam* made an *Eve*. But this is said to be the Heresy of the *Montanists*; and is *inconsistent* with the *Indivisibility* of the divine Essence. And the opinion of *Valentius* and others, that the Son is an *Emission* or *Emanation* of the Father; is liable to the same Objection. For if they suppose an Emanation, that *divides* the indivisible Essence; it is a contradiction in terms: and to suppose an Emanation

(*o*) *Ex seipso proferendo filium fecit.* lii. con. *Marcion.* c. 27. (*p*) *Adv. Prax.* c. ix. (*q*) *Eundem illum factum esse dixit consubstantialem.* Epist. *Arii ad Alexan.*

that does *not divide*, is to suppose no Emanation at all. But we are told by *Zanchius*; that this objection is made from our not perceiving how any thing can be *generated from* another, and be his Son; so as to remain *in* him by whom he is generated: for, says he, they think all generation is made *ab extra*, and none *ab intra*. And so the Generation, that Bishop *Bull* defends, is not an *external* Production; but an *internal* one(*r*). But this only brings us into more confusion: for an *internal* Production *without a Separation*, will not be *another* produced; (according to Bishop *Pearson's* definition of a Son) but it will be the *same*: that is, it will be *no Production* at all. Thus *Petavius* speaks the opinion of the Fathers, when he says, the *Word* was *inclosed* (*insitum & inclusum*) in the bowels of God, before it was begotten; and therefore *not yet called a Son*, but was the *same as the Father*. And *Irenæus* fully confutes this unintelligible notion, as follows; “ If they say of the Son,
 “ that he was *not emitted* out of the Father; but
 “ was *in* the Father himself: First, it is super-
 “ fluous or to no purpose even to say, that he
 “ was *emitted*: for *how* was he *emitted*, if he
 “ continued in the Father? for an Emission is
 “ the *external Manifestation* of that which is

(*r*) *Bull's* op. 284. and he says, p. 100. *Tanquam ex utero exiit* καὶ ἐνεργεῖαν.

“emitted *out of* the emittent(s).” And it was the general doctrine of the *Anti-nicenes*; that the Son was *always* in the Father *ab æterno*, as his Wisdom unbegotten and unsubstantial; because God is *always rational* and *wise*: but that he was *substantially begotten*, and became *another*, by coming *forth* from the Father; *profiliens* & *progrediens* (t): but how could this be, without a Separation?

On the other hand, Bishop *Pearson* considers the Generation of the Son, not as a *partial Emanation*, but as a *total* and *plenary Communication* of the divine Substance (u); as indeed it must be, if it be any Communication of Substance at all. For an individual Substance cannot be communicated partially; but either wholly or else not communicated—and to *communicate* the whole divine Substance, is to *part* with it; and so Almighty God must be supposed to have communicated Himself, in order to produce a second Person: but this would not be the consequence; even with finite Beings. A total Communication of Substance in a finite Being, would be merely a change of place; without any new production or generation.

(s) *Si autem non emissum extra Patrem illum dicent, sed in ipso Patre; primo quidem superfluum erit etiam dicere emissum esse eum: Quemadmodum enim emissus est, si intra Patrem erat? Emissio enim est ejus quod emittitur extra emittentem Manifestatio.* Lib. II. c. 17.

(t) *Whitby* Dis. Mod. 107.

(u) *Pearson*, 137, 138.

But

But the Supreme Being is incapable of any such Communication; because he is infinite, and fills all space. Besides, the Communication of the whole divine Essence includes a Communication of the divine attributes, which are essential to it, and inseparable from it (x); and if both are communicated, the *Personality* must be communicated; and the Father and Son will not only be one and the same *Substance*, but one and the same *Person*: which is *Sabellianism*. Besides, if the whole Substance was communicated to the Son, how could he be ἐκ τῆς ὁσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ; *out of the Substance* of God? according to this notion, he must be the *very Substance* itself, and the whole Substance; and the Son must be the *Father himself*; or in other words, as *Athanasius* observes of *Sabellianism*, this notion destroys the very Essence of the Son; and falls in with the doctrines of the *Monöousians* and *Tautöousians* (y).

I proposed, before I ended this chapter, to consider the strange opinion, which some learned Christians have maintained; in order to prove the divine *Fecundity*; to wit, that God is not *One in Number*; but only in *Nature*, or *Substance*. For it is the divine Nature [Substance or Godhead] that is *not steril*, says Bishop

(x) Bishop *Pearson* says, the divine Perfections and Attributes are the same with the divine Essence. p. 127.

(y) See page 168.

Pearson (z); and Dr. *Allix* agrees, that God is *unus* and not *unicus*; *One* God, but not the *Only* God. And he quotes *Philo* with approbation; “that the Unity of God is of so transcendental
“a nature, as to have nothing in common with
“other Beings who fall under number. And
“these, he says, are the steps which we take to
“shew that an eternal Generation in the divine
“Nature is no Contradiction(a).” But how
God can be more than One in *Nature*, unless
there be *more than One God*; or how there can
be more than One God, consistently with the
declarations of *Moses*, that *Jehovah* is *one*(b);
and with the declarations of the New Testament,
that God is *one*; ὁ Θεὸς εἷς ἐστὶ(c), is not easy to
make-out. And to say that God is *One* in so
transcendental a manner, as to be *no more* than
One; is to talk unintelligibly: and must lead
us on the one side into Atheism, and on the
other into Polytheism(d).

That we are hereby led into Atheism, has
been long ago proved by *Tertullian* in these
words; “If God is not *One*, he is *not*: there-
“fore God is the *only* God: nor otherwise the
“only God, but as being *supremely great*: nor
“otherwise supremely great, but as *having no*
“*equal*: nor otherwise without equal, but as

(z) Let. I. p. 168.—Let. VII. p. 867. (a) *Pearson*,
p. 135. (b) *Allix* Jewish Ch. 121, 268. (c) *James*
ii. 19. (d) *Emlyn's* Tracts, Vol. I. 166.

“being the *only God*. *Two* therefore supremely
 “great are inconsistent; because the *supreme*
 “*greatness* consists in *having no equal*: but to
 “have no equal can only be the property of
 “One; and cannot possibly agree to *Two(e)*.”
 And so *Eusebius* speaks; “there is only One
 “God; namely He who is without beginning
 “and unbegotten: and the cause why the Son
 “is as he is—nor do we declare the two sub-
 “stances to be equal in honour, nor both to be
 “without beginning and unbegotten(*f*).”

In short, if the Son be generated from the
 Substance of the Father, so as to continue the
same one Substance; it must follow that God is
not prolific in Substance: and on the other hand,
 if the Son be so generated from the Father's
 Substance, as to be *another* of the *same* Sub-
 stance with him, agreeably to the Bishop's de-
 finition; and God be thereby more than One in
 number; there will be more than One God.
 And this doctrine, if held in the beginning of
 Christianity, would have overturned all the ar-
 guments of the Christians against the Heathens:
 as it would have been an unanswerable reply in
 the defenders of Polytheism, that the many
 Gods they worshipped were formed out of the
 Substance of the Supreme *Demiurgus*, and were
 consubstantial with him: and consequently,

(*e*) *Contra Marcel.* lib. i. c. 3. (*f*) *Whitby Disq.*
 mod. p. 8. See what follows from *Irenæus*.

though . . .

though many in number, they were all one and the same in Nature.

CHAPTER X.

The reasoning of Basil examined.

THE *Athanasians* at the *Nicene Council* believed each of the three Persons in the Trinity to subsist of itself; that is, to be a perfect Substance: and that these three Substances were united inseparably by a *Perichoresis*; which prevented them from being three Gods: and this was the Catholic Faith, according to Bishop *Bull*(a).—On the contrary, the *Sabellians* believed; that God was not three Substances united: but only one Substance, both before the generation and afterwards. And they argued against the *Atha-*

(a) The words of *Basil* are thus translated in Bishop *Bull*, p. 32. from *Basil*, tom. III. p. 292. *Dixerunt enim illi homöousii vocem, notionem Substantiæ, et eorum quæ ex ipsa sunt, repræsentare nobis: ita ut Substantia distributa (καταμερισθεῖσα) homöousii appellationem impertiat iis in quæ distributa fuerit (διηγέσθαι).* Hoc quidem verissimum est de ære, & numismatibus inde cufis: at in Deo Patre & in Deo Filio nec Substantia est anterior, nec utrique videtur superstrata: (ὑπερχεῖμένη) hoc enim dicere vel cogitare, impietatis omnem rationem excedit.

See the Council of *Constantinople*. *Niceph.* Vol. II. p. 262, and 245.

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Nasian notion of the *homöousion*, as follows— That, as God was originally ἐν πρᾶγμα, one Substance, or Thing; he must always continue so: for as much as there could not be a Production of two or more Substances from the ἐν πρᾶγμα, without a division of the divine Essence; and a division implied a contradiction to the divine ἀφθάρσια, or incorruptibility; and was therefore impossible.

The great *Basil* endeavours to remove this Objection: and says, they objected to the word *homöousios*; 1st. as if it represented a notion of Substance and its properties; 2. as if the Substance being distributed gave the name of Consubstantial to the things into which it was distributed; this, he says, is true of Brasses, and the Coins that are made of it; but 3dly, in God the Father and God the Son neither is the Substance anterior, nor 4thly, is it superstrated; and 5thly, to say or think such a thing is impious.

It will be a sufficient reply to all this, to ask a few plain questions. And

1st. The great *Basil* complains, that the word *homöousios* is objected-to by the *Sabellians*; as if it represented the notion of *Substance* and its *properties*. But what else can it represent; and preserve any meaning? Does not the word *homöousios* signify, *of the same Substance*? And can we have any meaning to the word, without

out an idea of Substance, (how imperfect soever it may be;) or any idea of the *same* Substance, or of *communicating* Substance; without the ideas both of *Identity* and *Communication*?—But, in truth, the argument against the *homöousians* is equally conclusive; whether it be used of *Substance* or any thing else. If two proceed from One, that One must be divided; and, if the One be indivisible, (which all Christians agree to be the nature of the divine Substance) then two cannot proceed from it. And this must be universally true of every thing that exists, or can exist even in idea.

2dly. He says, they objected to the word; as if *Substance* being *distributed* gave the name of *consubstantial* to those things into which it is distributed. But I answer; are not the Son and Holy Ghost said to be consubstantial with the Father; because the divine Substance is *communicated* to them? and what do we mean by *Communication* of Substance, if not *distribution* of Substance?

3dly. *Basil* says; though it be true of Brass and Coins, that the Substance being distributed gives the name of Consubstantial to the Coin; yet in God the Father and God the Son the Substance is *not anterior*.—Can the great *Basil* mean, that the divine Substance of the Father did not exist *prior* to the *Generation* of the Son; by which he became consubstantial with the Father?

Father? If this were the Case; how could the great *Athanasius* say, that the Son existed *before* his generation; τὸν ὄντα πρότερον, ὕστερον γεννηθῆναι εἰς υἱόν. Did the Son exist *before the divine Substance*, from which he was generated? Certainly not. And yet if the ὕστερον *afterwards*, when he was generated into a Son, was *coeternal* with the divine Substance; (i. e. if the divine Substance was not anterior to the Communication of it) and the Son existed πρότερον, *before* that generation; as *Athanasius* and the *Nicene Council* assert: he must have existed *before the divine Substance*; which is impossible.

4thly. *Basil* says, the divine Substance was *not superstrated* upon each of them. Certainly on the Father it was not; because he is unoriginate. But the Son received his Existence as a Second Substantial Person, ἐνυπόστατος, by Communication of the divine Substance; and where is the difference between the words *communicata*, *distributa*, & *superstrata*? And if he was *partaker* of the divine nature or Substance, *without* or *prior* to this Communication; his generation does not consist in the Communication of Essence; as Bishop *Bull*, Bishop *Pearson*, &c. would persuade us.

Lastly, *Basil* says; it is impious to suppose *such a distribution* of Substance, when speaking of the Father and the Son.—And this is what the *Anti-homöousians* also insist upon: and yet, as *impious* as it is, they charge it upon the *Athana-*

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sians, as the *unavoidable* Consequence of their Principles; if their words are allowed to have any sense at all. And for this very reason *because it is impious*; the *Anti-homöousians* of all sects, as well as the *Sabellians*, deny any such Distribution of the divine Substance to be possible: not only under the name *Distribution*, but all other names whatever which convey the same Idea, and imply a *Communication*, *Emission*, *Emanation*, *Production*, or *Generation*, of or from the divine Substance; all which words imply the division of Essence, or else are used without any meaning.

To this the Emperor *Constantine* and the Fathers thought it sufficient to answer; that this Generation or Communication of Essence is not effected after the manner of Bodies; viz. by *division*; but as Light is generated from Light, without any division or diminution (*b*); and that those who make such objections consider the divine Essence *corporaliter*.

To this the *Anti-homöousians* reply; that the Communication of Substance must be either by *Partition*, as the pieces of Gold from the Mass; or by *Derivation*, as Children from their Parents; or by *Eruption*, as the branch from the Root; but the Son of God can be *from the Father's Substance* by none of these ways; and there can be no other conceived: and consequently,

(*b*) Bull, p. 34.—*Niceph.* VIII. 22.

if they do not mean in one or other of these ways(c), they have no determined Sense or Meaning to their words?

2dly. They answer; That when Light is communicated from one torch to another, it is as much divided; as a stick is by breaking it afunder.

3dly. That the question, with regard to the Generation of the Son, is not merely whether there is any *Diminution*; but whether there is any *Division*: for the *division* of the divine Substance is as *impossible*, as the *diminution* of it: and *Origin* declares, there must be a diminution in such a Communication, as well as a division.

4thly. It seems by such Similitudes, that the *Athanasians* have lost sight not only of the *Filiation* of the Son, but even of his Production; for the derived Light B, is not the *Son* of the Light A, from which it was derived; nor even a *new production*, but merely a *derivation*; and in that sense they must confess the Holy Ghost to be a Son, as much as the *Logos*.

5thly. The objections here made, that those who argue in this manner consider the divine Essence *corporaliter*; is nothing to the Purpose: the argument depends upon a Truth, which is common to all Beings; and even to all abstract Ideas; viz. that two can never be *produced out of One*, without a *division*: For, till One be

(c) Niceph. VIII. 18.—Socr. I. 8.

divided, it will never become Three. Two more may be *created* indeed; but then they will not be *out of* the original One. And this the Bishop himself has proved: while he was endeavouring to prove the contrary: For he says, as I before observed; “By reason of the simplicity of the divine Essence, it is *incapable of* “*Division*; and by reason of its infinity, it is “*incapable of Multiplication*(d). Where then is the divine Fecundity? It is impossible that one should become two; without becoming more than it was before in number: and every Production, that can be conceived, without *multiplication* to increase the *quantity*, or *division* to increase the *number*, must be a *new Creation*. And the same consequence must follow from his being generated without any *Change* in the original One.—In short, to make Three out of One, and to divide One into Three, is the same thing. And to say that *two* are any how produced from *one* original Substance (whether material or immaterial, it matters not) without *alteration* in the original *One*; is an absolute Contradiction; it is to say; that *One* becomes *Three*, while it continues to be but *One*; or that *Two* proceed from the original *One*, while they continue to be the same original *One* from which they proceed; and so *proceed* without any *procession*.

(d) Bulli op. p. 138.

Another argument to prove that no Emanation can be from the Substance of an *infinite* Being, whether it be supposed to be material or immaterial; is taken from the nature of *Infinity*: as we argue with regard to infinite *Space*. For whatever is said to emanate from what is infinite, must continue unalterably the same that it was before such supposed Emanation: and will not (e. g.) produce another *Space*, or another *Substance*, but the same *identical Space* and *Substance*: for what is *infinite* cannot be *extended* or produced; nor any thing *emanate*, where there is no *extra*.—And indeed, it is absurd to suppose, that it can be otherwise; consistently with the *Immutability* of the divine nature. For the Supreme God and Father of the Universe ever *was*, and ever *will be*, *unchangeably* the same; without the least Alteration in his *Substance* or *Attributes*. And those who think differently from this, will find themselves involved in inexplicable difficulties. And it is this undeniable Truth which militates against any literal *Generation* or *Production* or *Emission* from the divine Essence; whether it be said to be *exterior* or *interior*. For if it be supposed to be effected by any *change* in the divine Essence, it is inconsistent with his *Immutability* and necessary Existence: and to suppose it effected *without* any *change*, is to use words without meaning. An interior Production, says Dr. *Whitby*, either
supposes

supposes *something* in the Father, which was not in him before that Production; or else *nothing*. If nothing, it is the Production of nothing [that is, no Production:] If something, then something *new* will be in the Father by that Production; for a Production cannot be conceived, where nothing *new* is produced(*e*). But nothing *new* can be produced in *him*, who is *always the same*; and consequently there can be no such Production.

“Est ergo hujus Essentiæ substantialis Pro-
 “ductio, rei non producibilis Productio; rei
 “ortum non habentis Ortus.”

CHAPTER XI.

*Mr. Cumming's opinion examined, concerning the
 Generation of the Son of God.*

THE Rev. Mr. *Cumming*, formerly Minister of the *Scotch Church in London*; whose Orthodoxy can no more be suspected, than Dr. *Waterland's*; (for he declares, I believe with my whole heart and soul, that *Jesus* is the great God absolutely supreme over all (*a*); and with great zeal and fair argument endeavours to

(*e*) Præf. Disq. Mod. xxi.

(*a*) P. 306.

support

support his opinion :) argues upon this subject as follows.—

“ If the Son of God be God *himself*, and of
 “ the *same Essence* with the Father; to which
 “ Essence it belongs to be *uncaused*, or to exist
 “ *necessarily*; the Son can have *no Cause* or
 “ Author: but is as much without original, as
 “ the Father himself(*b*).” And again, “ Men,”
 says he, “ may perplex a plain case with words
 “ that have no meaning; but it is as evident,
 “ as that two and two make four; that what-
 “ ever exists, must exist either by *absolute Ne-*
 “ *cessity* of Nature, or by the *Will* and *Power*
 “ of an other. And whatever exists by the
 “ *Will* and *Power* of another (in opposition to
 “ necessary existence) is as much a *created*
 “ thing (whatever the manner of its existence
 “ be) and as dependent on the sovereign Will
 “ of that other, as the meanest animal.

“ If it be said, that the Son may have his
 “ Existence by *absolute Necessity* of Nature;
 “ and yet *derive* his Being from the *Will* and
 “ Power of the Father, as from the Supreme
 “ Cause; I answer, that if these words *Derive*,
 “ *Will*, *Cause*, are understood properly in a
 “ philosophical sense, it is a contradiction in
 “ Terms.” And Dr. *Whitby* says the same
 thing; “ a *necessary* emanation from the Father,
 “ by the *Will* and *Power* of the Father, is an

(*b*) *Ibid.* Postsc. 223.

“ *express*

“ exprefs Contradiction: because Necessity in
 “ its very nature excludes all operation of
 “ Will; though it may be consistent with
 “ Approbation(c).”

“ Let it be but acknowledged,” says Mr.
Cumming, “ that the Word or *Logos* exists by
 “ *absolute Necessity* of Nature; that he is eter-
 “ nally and necessarily what he is; and it will
 “ follow of its own accord, that he is *self-ex-*
 “ *istent*; or, which is the same thing, that the
 “ nature of the Son does *not depend*, as to its
 “ existence, on any *other* nature distinct from
 “ itself. But if he will ascribe any *proper*
 “ *Causality* to the Will of the Father in the
 “ generation; it will follow, whether we will
 “ or no; that the Son is as much a *voluntary*
 “ *Production*, as any *created* Angel or Spirit.—
 “ I cannot therefore help thinking, that Dr.
 “ *Clarke* rather acts the part of a Sophister
 “ playing with words; than of a learned
 “ Divine: when to this objection “ *Every*
 “ *thing that exists must be either God himself, or*
 “ *made by him*,” he answers; “ It has been
 “ generally thought very Orthodox to suppose,
 “ that *something may be begotten by him(d)*:
 “ Since he must know, that the notion of the
 “ Son’s being *begotten*, or *deriving his Being*

(c) *Whitby’s Agreement with the Fathers*; Sect. iv.—
 Answer to *Waterland*, Part II. p. 19, to 22.—Last
 Thoughts, p. 20.

(d) *Cumming*, p. 203.

“ from

“ from the Will and Power of the Father, as
 “ from the Supreme Cause, in opposition to
 “ *necessary* existence; is the very same thing as
 “ being made(e).”

From all this, which shews Mr. *Cumming* to have spoken very sensibly, and with great zeal and sincerity of heart; he would conclude, that Christ is the self-existent God. But here he finds himself involved in as great or greater difficulties; than any he had endeavoured to avoid. For if Christ be self-existent and unoriginate, how can he be said to be begotten?—The manner of his generation is here out of the dispute; and gives way to the prior question, which relates to the Origination itself—viz. If Christ be a begotten Son, whether by *Generation*, *Emanation*, *Creation*, or any other manner whatsoever; ineffable or not, inconceivable or not; he is *not* an *unoriginate* Self-existent Being: for if he were *self-existent*, he could not be said to be *generated* or *created*, or to *emane*, or be *produced*, in any manner whatsoever.

To this Mr. *Cumming* answers, as follows;
 “ If it undeniably followed from the Son’s
 “ *being begotten*, that therefore he must be *de-*
 “ *pendent* as to his Being and Operations, on
 “ the *Will* and *Power* of the Father, as the
 “ *Effect* on its proper *Cause*; (and consequently

(e) In the Reply to *Waterland*’s Def. p. 301, the Doctor does not speak out. See p. 328.

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“ be the Father’s Creature :) I should from
“ other things spoken of in Scripture, con-
“ clude without hesitation, that the Term *Son*
“ was purely *æconomical*; and did not belong
“ to him with respect to his divine præexistent
“ nature considered absolutely.” But, (as he
explains himself,) merely with respect to his
office of Messiah.

The reason why Mr. *Cumming*, though very
warm and sanguine, does not conclude this
without hesitation, is this; take it in his own
words. “ I will not affirm, that Generation
“ belongs to the divine Persons absolutely;
“ neither will I presumptuously deny it—As it
“ is not improbable, the terms *Father* and *Son*
“ are purely *æconomical* [relative to his office
“ only] so an *eternal necessary Generation* or
“ *Emanation* is not impossible; nor can ever be
“ proved to involve Contradiction.” And
again; “ it sufficiently answers my purpose, and
“ shews the uncertainty of the first Principle
“ upon which Dr. *Clarke* and the rest of the
“ *Arians* build their doctrines of a derived de-
“ pendent God; that they can never certainly
“ prove, that the *Deity* ascribed to our Lord in
“ Scripture is founded in his *Sonship*; nor yet
“ the impossibility of such an *eternal necessary ge-*
“ *neration*, as would confessedly infer his being
“ *equally self-existent* with the Father.”

I imagine,

I imagine, Dr. *Clarke* (who was no *Arian*, but only so called by his fellow Christians, because they think it meritorious to misrepresent and abuse one another) would readily have allowed; that neither the Deity ascribed to Christ in the Scripture, nor the Sonship itself, can either of them be proved to relate to his metaphysical nature: I believe, he would rather have referred them to his *spiritual Authority* and *Dominion*, when he received all power in Heaven and Earth; or to his miraculous birth of the virgin *Mary*.—But as to what Mr. *Cumming* says farther, of such an eternal necessary Generation of the Son, as would confessedly imply his Self-existence and Equality with his Father; it seems absolutely impossible: for the following reasons:

In the first place, because a generation of any kind is incompatible with *Self-existence* and Equality: For *Self-existence* implies, in the very idea of it, that the Being is *unoriginate*: whereas *generation*, in its very idea, implies *Origination*; and *Origination* implies *Dependency* on another. On the contrary, if an *Equality* in Existence between the Father and the Son be supposed; one of these Consequences must follow—that *Christ* is the *Father himself*, which is *Sabellianism*; and destroys the Existence of the Son: or else that there are *two Self-existent Beings*; which is *Polytheism*.

2dly. An eternal Generation, in the true *philosophical* sense of the word *Eternal*, is another Contradiction: For Generation supposes a Production *from* and *by* some other; and, consequently, that other who begets must exist *prior* to that which is begotten; the Production therefore cannot be *properly* and *absolutely* eternal: nor is it orthodox to think so; but, on the contrary, that the Son himself existed before his Generation(*f*).—The invention of Men hath been long enough upon the rack; to prove, in opposition to common sense and reason, that an effect may be coeternal with the unoriginate Cause that produced it. But the proposition has mystery and falsehood written in its forehead; and is only fit to be joined with Transubstantiation, and other mysteries of the same nature. *Novatian* says expressly; that “he who is unoriginate must necessarily exist before him that is originate(*g*):” and *Eusebius* says; “every one will confess, that the Father existed before the Son; and had an *hypostasis* before him.” And no axiom in *Euclid* can be more certain. It is one of those truths which are hid from many of the wise and learned, and revealed to Babes. And *Arius* argued very justly; “If the Father begat

(*f*) See ch. LX.—*Cudworth*, 608.
B. I. ch. vi.

(*g*) *Socr.*

“the

“ the Son, he that was begotten had a *beginning*
 “ of his existence(*b*).”

The argument used by St. *Au'stin* in answer to this, will give us a specimen of the sophistry with which it was opposed. “ God is the
 “ *Cause* of *all* things; but that which is the
 “ *Cause* of *all* things, is the *Cause* of *his own*
 “ *Wisdom*. But God was never *without* his
 “ *Wisdom*: therefore he is the *eternal Cause* of
 “ his *eternal Wisdom* or *Word*. Nor is he prior
 “ to his *Wisdom* in *Time*.”—By the same kind of reasoning it might be proved; that, because God created all things, therefore he created himself; and was the *Cause* of his own *necessary* existence: which is a Contradiction in terms. But did not this learned Father know, that the physical necessity by which God is what he is, is no ACT; and that his *Wisdom* is no EFFECT; and is not produced by any Cause; but is as necessary as his existence, and merely a mode of it(*i*)?—

Socrates tells us; that *Aetius*, who is looked-upon as an Arch-heretic, having never had an academic Master, stuck close to the Sophisms of *Aristotle's Categories*: upon which account he could neither understand, how there could be a *generation* without a *beginning*: nor how that which is *begotten* could be *coeternal* with

(*b*) Lib. 73. quæst. quæst. 16.—*Bulli* op. 245.

(*i*) Reply to *Waterland's* Def. 251.

him that *begat* it(k). But surely he had no need to have read *Aristotle*; to see what all mankind must assent-to at first hearing. However, it is no new thing to find men risque their very proofs of a God; in defence of human Institutions, and a favourite Hypothesis. And this is the case of the present question: For, if an *Originate* Being can be *properly* and *absolutely eternal*, and *without beginning*; it will be impossible to prove, that there is *any unoriginate* Being at all. But the Universe may be co-eternal with its Creator; and be created, without ever beginning to exist: and every Being in an eternal Succession may be coeternal with him that begat him.

3dly. Since *necessary* Generation must always continue the same, and is capable of no limitation; it could not be confined to one or two Persons or Offsprings: but must be infinite. The strict Equalist, says Bishop *Rust*, could not give any reason, why the Deity was not multiplied into an Infinity of Hypostases; rather than have its progression stopped at Three. Nay, it seems necessary, by their Hypothesis; that the Multiplication should be infinite.—For the first Original Good communicating of himself to his first Productions, (according to the emanative fertility of its own exuberant fullness) If they did as fully receive

(k) B. II. ch. 35.

his Life and Power, as he their author was himself possessed of; the Third would be as *able* and (by necessity of equal plenitude) would be as much *constrained* (as I may so speak with reverence) to produce three more; and so on perpetually. And for them to say, that the number was limited to Three by explicit Will and Council, is to hazard the necessary existence, and consequently the Divinity of the two *Hypostases*; and to induce such an indifferency into the first and earliest operations of the Author of all things, as is inconsistent with infinitely full Goodness⁽¹⁾; and no less so with absolute Necessity: for absolute Necessity, dependent on Volition, is a Contradiction.

For these reasons, I shall make no scruple to conclude; that such an *eternally necessary* generation of the Son, as would *necessarily* imply his *Self-existence* and Equality with the Father, as Mr. Cumming supposes; is absolutely impossible.

(1) *Phœnix*, Vol. I. p. 13.

CHAPTER XII.

A summary view of the difficulties which attend the homöousian Faith, and the arguments which are generally used by the learned Christians in the defence of it; by way of Queries.

Qu. 1. **W**HETHER the notion of the One Supreme God, as represented by the *Athanasians* to consist of three Substances joined together by a *perichoresis*, like a threefold Cord (*a*); two of them *originate* and one *unoriginate*: does not seem to imply; that he is not a *Simple*, but a *Compound Being*?

Qu. 2. Whether the notion of *one* Substance only, to the *three* Persons; as held by the *Sabellians*: does not destroy the real Trinity of *Hypostases*, and only leaves a Trinity of *Modes* (*b*)?

Qu. 3. Whether, if there be *three* Persons *ἰσότητος* [substantial] in every respect equal; and *each* of *himself* God; as declared by the *Pseudo-Athanasians*; there can be any *real Unity* (*c*)?

Qu. 4. If there be three Persons, in every respect equal; and these *three* are all joined

(a) Chap. III. 999.

(b) Ch. III. p. 997.

(b) *Ibid.* 998.

together in one Substance: whether they will not be *three Gods in one Substance* (d)?

Qu. 5. Whether the notion of a *Perichoresis*, by which the *Athanasians* suppose the three Substances of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are joined together, like a threefold Cord; so that without this there would be three Gods: is built upon any Authority of Scripture (e)?

Qu. 6. Whether the Father and Son are not represented in the Scripture as *separate* and *distinct* Beings; so that the one is ἕτερος τῷ πατρὶ ἀριθμῷ, another and distinct from the Father in number: as understood by *Justin Martyr* (f)?

Qu. 7. If they be not distinct and separate Beings, how could one of them be born of the Virgin *Mary*, *distinct* and *separate* from the other two?

Qu. 8. Whether a *Person*, abstracted and separate from its Substance, is not a mere *mode* of Existence and *non-entity* (g)?

Qu. 9. Whether Substance can be communicated to a *non-entity* or mere *mode* of existence?

Qu. 10. Whether any *Person* can possibly exist prior to, or posterior to, or any-how *separate* from its *Essence*?

(d) *Ibid.* 998. (e) *Ibid.* (f) Ch. I. 955. (g) *Bull.* & *Petav.* c. ii. p. 18.

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Qu. 11.

Qu. 11. If the *Person* of Christ cannot exist *posterior* to his *Essence*; whether his *Person* must not be *unoriginate* and *unbegotten* as well as his *Essence*?

Qu. 12. Whether a *Plurality* of *Persons* existing *originally* in the Infinite Being does not imply a *Plurality* of *Gods* (*b*)?

Qu. 13. Whether any *Person* can exist *eternally* in the infinite Being; who does not exist in it *originally*?

Qu. 14. Whether any *Person* can *begin* to exist in the divine Nature or Substance, wherein it did not exist *originally*; salving the divine Immutability? *Whitby*.

Qu. 15. Whether an *unoriginate* Being, who had no beginning, did not exist *prior* to Him, who *had* a beginning, and received his existence from him (*i*)?

Qu. 16. Whether a Production can be *coeternal* with the *unoriginate* Being who produced it?

Qu. 17. Whether any one can be begotten *into* Being, after his Existence?

Qu. 18. Whether, if Christ existed, *before* he was begotten; he was not *unbegotten* (*k*)?

Qu. 19. Whether it is possible to make a *Person* who is *begotten* to be *unbegotten*? If God is *unbegotten*, as to his *Essence*; how can it be said, that which is begotten is of his *Essence*?

(*b*) *Pearson*. (*i*) *Euseb. & Novat. 125*. (*k*) *Eunomius*.

How can the same Essence be both begotten and unbegotten? *Aëtius.*

Qu. 20. Whether any Being can be begotten in an unbegotten manner?

Qu. 21. Whether the Son was begotten by the Father voluntarily, or involuntarily? If involuntarily, then God was led by necessity of Nature; but if voluntarily, then the *Will* existed before the Son; which to assert, is to fall into *Arianism. Epiph. Ancorat. Ch. LII.* falsely marked LI. This is answered by *Epiphanius*; by saying, the Son was neither begotten *with* the Will of the Father, nor without it; but by an excellency of Nature: ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ὅλης φύσεως. But the question here returns; was the Son begotten *voluntarily* or *involuntarily*, by this Excellency of Nature?

Qu. 22. Whether a Generation into a Substance, *posterior* to an existence as an attribute, can properly be eternal?

Qu. 23. Whether a *self-existent* Substance can be *generated* or *produced*?

Qu. 24. Whether the Generation of a *self-existent* Substance would produce any thing that *was not before*?

Qu. 25. Whether a *self-existent* Substance, *after* its Generation or Production, could continue to be *self-existent* and *unoriginate*?

Qu. 26. Whether the generation of the Son be such a *proper* act of generation, as is the foundation of *Paternity*?

Qu. 27. Whether, if the *self-existent Substance* generated the *self-existent Substance*; the Father did not beget himself?

Qu. 28. Whether the generation of the Son could be *out of* the Father's Substance, without a *diminution* of the *paternal Essence* (1)?

Qu. 29. Whether there can be any Communication of Substance to a Being, before his *actual* Existence? If not,

Qu. 30. How could the first Originate Being receive his Existence [qua *γενεσις*] by such Communication?

Qu. 31. Whether mere Communication of Substance does any thing more than alter the *mode* of Existence; without affecting the *existence itself*? every thing existing after such a Communication, which existed before; but only in another manner.

Qu. 32. Whether Communication of Substance, *without Separation of Substance*, will produce either another Substance or another Person?

Qu. 33. Whether Communication of Substance, considered only as the *admission* of another Being into Participation of Substance, is any new Production; or can possibly produce another Person?

Qu. 34. Whether a partial Communication of the divine Substance is not a contradiction to his divine *Incorruptibility*?

(1) Origen.

Qu. 35. Whether a *total* Communication of the divine Substance is not an *impossibility*? and whether it would produce another Person?

Qu. 36. Whether a Communication of Substance, *without any change*, is not a contradiction?

Qu. 37. Whether a Communication of the divine Substance, *by any change*, is not inconsistent with the divine Immutability? *Whitby.*

Qu. 38. Whether a Being can communicate its Substance to *itself*; or *beget* its *own* Substance?

Qu. 39. Whether the divine Substance could be communicated to the divine attribute of Wisdom; to which it was *eternally* joined by necessity of Nature?

Qu. 40. If the *Wisdom* of the Father, became a *Person distinct* and *different* from the Father; whether the Father must not be *destitute* of his Wisdom (*m*)?

Qu. 41. Whether there can be any Production *out of* an infinite Substance, where there is no *extra*?

Qu. 42. Whether an *interior* Production can be made, without any change of the divine Substance; any more than an *exterior* one?

Qu. 43. Whether an *interior* Production, where nothing is produced; or an *exterior* Produc-

(*m*) *Alexander Alexand.* See his Letter to *Socrates*, lib. i.
tion,

tion, without any change; can either of them produce a second Person?

Qu. 44. Whether an interior Production *within* the Substance of the Father, [ἐν τῇ ὑπόστασις,] is consistent with the Production which the *Athanasians* contend for, and declare to be *out* of the Substance of the Father [ἐκ τῆς ὑπόστασις,]?

Qu. 45. If the *Person* of Christ be any thing distinct from his *Substance*; as Bishop *Pearson* supposes; and Generation signifies to be born into a similitude of Nature, as he likewise asserts; (πᾶν τὸ γεννᾶν ὁμοίον ἐαυτῷ γεννᾶν, as *Epiphanius* expresses it;) how can the *Person* of Christ be supposed to be generated by communication of *Substance only*?

Qu. 46. Whether the *Substance* can be communicated, without the *Attributes*?

Qu. 47. Whether the *Substance* and *Attributes* can be communicated, without the *Person*?

Qu. 48. If both the *Substance* and *Person* of the Father be communicated to the Son; whether he will not be the *same Person*, as well as the *same Substance*, with the Father?

Qu. 49. Whether there can be a Production, *from or out of* any one Substance; without a *Division* of that one Substance, *from or out of* which it is produced?

Qu. 50. If any Substance proceeds from *one*; whether it must not be *separated* from that one, before

before it can become a *second* Person or another?

Qu. 51. If a second Person is produced from the Father's Substance, of the same *nature* and *Substance* with the Father; and the Substance be the Godhead, according to the doctrine of the *Athanasians*; whether he will not be *another God*?

Qu. 52. But if this second Person is not a Being or Substance *separate* and *different* from the Father; how can he be said to be *produced*? *Irenæus*.

Qu. 53. If mere Communication of Substance be the *proper* Generation of a *Son*; whether the Holy Ghost is not a *Son*, as well as the *Logos*?

Qu. 54. Whether an indivisible Division, and a divided Conjunction, are not Contradictions?

Qu. 55. Whether Christ *actually* descended from Heaven; or only *quasi*? *Bull*.

Qu. 56. Whether Christ *actually* divested himself of his Glory; or whether it was only in APPEARANCE? *Waterland*.

Qu. 57. Whether existence in *Idea* or in *Potentia* be any *real* existence of the *Things*; or only of the *Idea*?

Qu. 58. Whether any Person can *suffer*, without feeling *Pain*? *Hilary*.

Qu. 59.

Qu. 59. Whether any Person can feel Pain; except in his own Substance or Essence?

Qu. 60. Whether an *impassible Substance* is capable of feeling Pain in any Nature or Person?

Qu. 61. Whether if God is not *One* in *Number*, as well as in *Nature*; there is not *more* than *One* God?

Qu. 62. Whether He is not the *only One* God; who hath no Superior, to whom no other was the Cause of his existence, who is the head of the Son, and his God? See the words of *Eusebius* quoted in Chap. I.

Qu. 63. Whether the word *God* is not used in Scripture in different senses?

Qu. 64. Whether any Being can be coeternal with itself? *Athanasius*.

Qu. 65. Whether two *eternal* Beings are not two *Gods*?

Qu. 66. Whether all communicable Perfections may not be communicated to a *created* Being? And if so,

Qu. 67. Whether the *incommunicable* Perfections of God can be communicated to *any* Being?

Qu. 68. If *all communicable* Perfections may be communicated to a *created* Being; and *no incommunicable* Perfections can be communicated to *any* Being; is it not profane and impious to assert, that God may not, if he pleases, give to a *created* Being, all the Perfections that can be given to a *begotten* Being? and
exalt

exalt him above all Principalities and Powers, and make him our Creator and Lord and King, with spiritual dominion over us, to give eternal Life to as many as he will?

Qu. 69. Whether necessary existence, by the *will* of another, be not a Contradiction?

Qu. 70. Whether generation of Substance by *necessity* of Nature, is not *incapable* of limitation; and must not be *infinite* in its Productions?

Qu. 71. Whether a *begotten* Being is not an *Originate* Being? and whether *Origination* does not imply *Dependence* and *Inferiority*, as much as *Creation*?

Qu. 72. Whether *Creation* is any more a Derogation, because it is common to all except the Unoriginate One; than *Existence* and *Substance* are derogations to the Unoriginate One; both which are common to all Beings whatever (*n*)?

Qu. 73. If the Apostles themselves were not such Proficients, as to understand the eternal generation of the Son to be from the *Father's*

(*n*) It is upon this account that *Plotinus* argued, that God was above all Essence. He might just as safely have concluded, that he was above all Existence: because all other Beings exist. (*Cudworth*, 585.) *Constantine* speaks in the same manner; as if God was above Essence: and quotes it as the opinion of *Plato*. Oration to the Convent of Saints, ch. iii. and ix. in the works of *Eusebius*.

F f f f f f f

Sub-

Substance; as *Jerom* confesses: how can such a Belief be necessary to Salvation?

Qu. 74. If the Faith of the *Antenicens*, with regard to so many of these Questions, is liable to few or none of these difficulties; is it not more likely to be the true and Apostolic Faith?

N. B. If it had been revealed, that the Son of God was begotten from the *Father's Substance*; all the above difficulties would be overruled by divine Authority: but, as no such revelation can be produced, they militate very strongly against such an opinion.

If the simple question had been merely, in what manner the Son was originated; the *existence* itself would not have been questioned: and it might have been answered very properly, we know not how; or, in the words of *Constantine*, that it was effected *divinis arcanisque rationibus*: and with this answer both the *Athanasians* and *Arians* should have acquiesced; as resolving the *cause* and *manner* into the secret ways of Providence. But the question between the *Arians* and *Athanasians* was very different—It did not relate simply to the manner of the Son's *Existence*; but to the manner of his *Existence from the Father's Substance*: upon which question the *Arians* denied the Fact; and argued, that it was premature to explain the manner of his *existence from the Father's*

Father's Substance; either by the *power* of God, or by any *other* medium; till the Fact itself was proved, that he *did exist from the Father's Substance*: which they supposed to be impossible, and impious to assert.

CHAPTER XIII.

That many learned, pious, and judicious writers have rejected the metaphysical Question of the Son's Generation; and explained it purely in an Oeconomical Sense.

THERE are several ingenious men among the Christians, who have observed; that the metaphysical nature of the Son of God is nowhere explained or revealed in the Scripture. They observe; that the words, *ἐκ Θεοῦ*, that he came *from* God, do not necessarily relate to his Generation; but may as well relate to his Mission: and the same words are used with regard to Men: that the New Testament never enters into such metaphysical questions; which only end in doubtful disputations and divisions, when considered as necessary to be believed in any particular manner: and therefore they totally disapprove of making a subject so contrary to the genius of the Christian Revelation a matter of Christian Faith and Orthodoxy: and these

blame both the *Athanasians* and *Arians*, for beginning such disputes: and in this they agree with the opinion of *Constantine*, in his excellent letter to *Athanasius* and *Arius*; which I have given the Reader at the end of these papers(a). They observe: that, before the metaphysical Generation of the Son was attempted to be explained, we were only ignorant of what it was *not* necessary for us to know; ignorant of what the Fathers declare it is impossible for us to know: and Experience shews us; that, after all disputes upon it, the world is no more satisfied upon the subject; than it was 1400 years ago. Men of the greatest Piety and Learning, after all the pains they have taken to understand these questions, are reflected-upon, on all sides; as Heretics and Blasphemers: and no prospect appears, that promises they will ever be decided with certainty; or examined without rancour and ill-will. From these and other material considerations, many learned and pious Christians have been inclined to believe; that the Generation of the Son ought rather to be explained in an œconomical, than in a philosophical or metaphysical sense; as the words *Son* and *begotten Son* are understood in other parts of Scripture; and to be applied to his receiving the office of a Mediator; as Dr. *Waterland* explains the third Generation of Christ, which

(a) Append. No. IV.

he speaks-of as a Mission, Manifestation, or Exertion, or taking a new office; and says, there is no change at all in it; not so much as in any mode of Existence(*b*). In which sense the words τῷ ποιήσαντι, that *made* him(*c*), seem to be used by St. Paul; which are justly translated, that *appointed* him. And so in Prov. viii. 22. the word ἐκτίσθη, was created, is explained by Eusebius to signify that God *ordained* or *appointed* Christ to reign over all things; “ut eo loco
 “verbum ἐκτίσσει, *creavit* pro verbo *ordinavit*, seu
 “constituit, sit dictum.” And he confirms the interpretation by several critical observations on other Texts(*d*).

Limborch in his *Amica collatio* tells us; that, when our Faith in Christ is required, it is never required to believe him to be *God himself*; but that he is the *Messiah*, formerly promised; or, what is the same thing, that he is the *Son of God*: because the appellations of the *Christ* and the *Son of God* are reciprocal. And he supposes; that the words of David; *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*(*e*)—and the words of God; *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son*(*f*); which were originally spoken of Solomon in a figurative sense, and were in a

(*b*) Observations on Dr. Waterland's Second Defence; p. 58, 59, 69, 72.

Marcel.

(*d*) Heb. iii. 2.

(*e*) Ps. ii. 7.

(*f*) II Sam. viii. 17.

most solemn manner applied to *Christ*(g); gave occasion to this denomination of a *Son*. And thence it came to pass; that the expressions, *Christ*, or *the Messiah*, and the *Son of God*, were considered among the *Jews* and the disciples of *Christ* to be reciprocal; as they appear to be, from many places of the New Testament.

Mr. *Cumming* speaks in the same manner: and says, there is not any one place in the old Testament; where *Son*, or *Seed*, or any expression denoting *Emanation*, is used of *Messias*; but what may without any violence be imputed to refer to his *Office* of Mediator, or to the Oeconomy of his Providence(b). And it cannot be denied; that, in the Jewish sense of Phraseology, to be the *Son of God*, by way of præminence, was to be the *Messiah*; and to be the *Messiah*, was to be the *Son of God*(i).

The places quoted by *Limborch*, to prove that *Messiah* and *Son of God* are reciprocal and convertible terms; are these: *Jo.* i. 46. to 50. *Mat.* xvi. 16. compared with *Mark* viii. 29. and *Luke* ix. 20. *Nathaniel* answereth; *Rabbi*, thou art the *Son of God*; thou art the King of *Israel*. And when *Christ* asked his disciples, Whom say ye that I am? *Peter* answered, according to *St. Matt.* Thou art *Christ*, the *Son of the living God*; and, according to *St. Mark*,

(g) See *Sykes* on the *Heb.*—Append. No. I. (b) P. 205. (i) *Ibid.* 207.

Thou

Thou art the *Christ*; and, according to St. *Luke*, Thou art the *Christ* of God.—In like manner when the high Priest adjured Christ to tell him if he be *Christ*, the *Son of God*: *Matt.* xvi. 63. (which is more plainly expressed in *Luke* xxii. the Elders and the chief Priests said; If thou art the *Christ*, tell us;) and repeated the same question in the 70th verse, Art thou the *Son of God*? This plainly proves, that *Messiah* or *Christ* or *Son of God* meant the same thing. And this, he says, is the opinion of the most eminent of the Christians; as *Episcopus*, *Erasmus*, *Grotius*, &c. I shall only quote a few remarkable passages; and refer my reader to the book itself. He tells us from *Erasmus*; that the Expression *Son of God* may be used of a Prophet, as well as of the *Son of God*; and is so used by *Christ*: and that when *Peter* confesseth *Christ* to be the *Son* of the living *God*; though he spake by inspiration, yet it is not credible that he believed then fully, that *Jesus* was the *Son of God* as to his *Nature*; of the same *Essence* with him: and that, when *Nathaniel* confesses him to be the *Son of God*, he had the same notion of him as St. *Peter*—And *Grotius* says; the *Son of God* was a name commonly given to the *Messias*: and that the words of *Nathaniel* are taken from the second Psalm; which the ancient *Hebrews* interpreted in

in a mystical Sense of the *Messias*(*k*). And when *Jesus* is called by *Peter*, *Christ*, *the Son of the living God*; *Mark* and *Luke* use only the word *Christ*: and so they use the words as synonymous. And upon the words of *Nathaniel* he observes, that the *Son of God* means the same as *Messias*: and lastly, he observes; that *Christ* himself affirms the Epithet *Son of God*, was given him in that sense. *Jo. x. 34, 35.*

Dr. *Whitby* takes notice; that to be *of God*, is the same as to be *sent from God*, to come from *God*, or to be the *Son of God*(*l*). And Bishop *Patrick*, in his treatise called “The Witnesses to Christianity,” which he dedicated to Archbishop *Sheldon*, lays it down in the plainest terms; that these two expressions, *Jesus* is the *Christ*, and *Jesus* is the *Son of God*, are the same in meaning; and import his *being sent* into the World *by God*, as he professed himself to be. And he quotes with approbation the opinion of *Jerom*; “that the Apostles were not yet
“such proficient, as to understand the eternal
“Generation of our Lord Jesus Christ from the
“Essence of the Father, when this Phrase, the
“*Son of God*, was first used by them: which
“therefore could not signify any thing, but the
“*Messiah* promised and sent into the world by
“God.—And he cites and approves of *Lactan-*

(*k*) *Sykes* on the *Heb.*—Append. No. I.
Thoughts, p. 116.

(*l*) Last

“*tius*,

“ *tius*, that the name of *Christ* was a name of
 “ *Power* and *Dominion*; signifying him to be
 “ their Sovereign. *Sic enim Judæi reges suos*
 “ *appellabant*; for in this Style the *Jews* were
 “ wont to speak of their Kings; which are
 “ called *Christs*, or *God’s anointed*(*m*).”

Limborch says; it clearly appears, that the name *Christ*, or *Son of God*, as an object of the Christian Faith, is not the denomination of a *Nature* or *Person*; but of an *Office*; because the *Christs*, or the *anointed* ones, were appointed and consecrated by their *Unction* to some particular Office. Now the Sense of any Proposition depends on the connection between the Subject and Predicate; so that, when the Sense of the Subject or Predicate appears, the Sense of the Proposition is manifest. And therefore when *Jesus*, the Subject of this Proposition, signifies the person or man, at that time well known in *Judæa*, and famous for his miracles, and afterwards crucified, and at length raised from the dead, and carried into heaven; and *Christ* or *Son of God*, signifies an Office no less known among the *Jews*, or rather a man honoured with that eminent Office; to-wit, that famous King and Redeemer of his people, so often promised to them by the Prophets; it follows, that to believe *Jesus* to be the *Christ* or

(*m*) *Patrick’s Witnesses*, p. 10.

Son of God, denotes no more than to believe that *Jesus* is that eminent Saviour so long promised; to whom the Office of saving Mankind was given by the Father, and who, to begin that Office, was largely endowed by the Father; and anointed, as it were, with the Holy Spirit. Hence it is; that the Scripture, when it describes the Faith by which we are to be saved, makes no mention of those things which respect properly his *Person* and divine *Nature*; but his *Office*(*n*). And whatever else is said of his *Person*, is never required as necessary to be believed.

This notion is also maintained by *Crellius* and *Wolzogen*: *Crellius* says; the *Son of God*, and *Christ*, generally denote the same thing in the Scriptures; whereby it appears, that there is no necessity of deriving the signification of the term *Son of God* from an *eternal Generation* out of the Substance of the Father(*o*). And *Wolzogen* says; the *Messiah*, according to the common custom of the Jews, was called simply and by way of excellence, the *Son of God*; as his proper name: that the name *Christ* or *Messias*, and the name *Son of God*, were in the *Jewish* usage taken for *one* and the *same* thing(*p*). And it was for this opinion, that Professor *Roel* was suspended by the province of *Holland*; and

(*n*) *Rom.* x. 9.—1 *Jo.* v. 1.
II. p. 272.

(*o*) *Crell.* op. tom.
(*p*) *Wolzogen* op. tom. I. p. 314.

articles were drawn up against him, to be signed by all the Preachers and Candidates for the ministry(*q*): and yet this notion is confirmed by the Apostles, who agree with the ancient Rabbins to interpret the words of the second Psalm, "this day have I begotten thee," to be spoken of *Christ*; and to relate, not to any *eternal Generation*, but to the *time* which is referred-to in the seventh verse; "to give him "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the "uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; "which was not completed till his Resurrection, "when all power was given him in heaven and "earth(*r*); and He became our High-Priest: "and thus it is interpreted by St. *Paul*; Christ, "says he, glorified not himself to be made a "High-Priest; [he did not take upon himself "that dignity] but he that said unto him, "Thou art my Son; this day have I *begotten* "thee(*s*):" that is, this day have I *exalted* thee, and *appointed* thee to that Office: as I observed, the word *ποιοῦσαυτήν* is used, *Heb.* iii. 2.

In another place the Apostle says; God hath fulfilled the promise [given to the Fathers] to their Children, in that he hath raised *Jesus* from the dead; as it is also written in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son; this day

(*q*) *Evans's* Second Letter to Mr. *Cumming*, p. 134, 136. (*r*) *Mat.* xxviii. 18. (*s*) *Heb.* v. 5.
vide *Sykes* ad loc.

have I begotten Thee.” And so the *Jews* speak on Ps. lxxii. 17. *filiabitur nomen ejus*. For, say they, the *Messiah*’s name is called *Jerinon*; *quia ipse filiaturus est omnes dormientes in pulvere*: because he will make Sons of all that sleep in the dust(*t*). And the same Apostle tells us, that Christ obtained the name of Son from Inheritance, [not by *natural generation*] when he became *heir* of all things, which was *after* his Resurrection; and relates to the *same time* as when he became our High Priest: being made so much better than the Angels, says the Apostle, as he hath by *inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they: for unto which of the Angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son; *this day* have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father; and he shall be to me a Son(*u*)? The Apostle therefore does not speak of any other Sonship or Generation, in these texts; than merely an *exaltation* to power and glory, in the same sense in which *Abarbanel* understands the word, *a Deo genitus*; *id est, erectus in imperium non in Homines tantum sed et in Angelos*. And Christ explains it in the same manner; in his answer to the accusation of the *Jews*, that he made himself God. “Is it not
 “written in your Law, I said, ye are *Gods*? if
 “he (*Moses*) calls them *God*, unto whom the
 “*Word* of God came; how say ye of Him,

(*t*) *Midrach Tillim* in Ps. xciii. 2.

(*u*) *Heb. i. 5.*
 “whom

“whom the Father hath *sanctified* and *sent* into
 “the world, thou blasphemest; because I said,
 “I am the *Son of God*(*x*)?” Here he plainly
 asserts himself to be the *Son of God*; because he
 was *sanctified* and *sent* into the world to *take*
upon him the *Office of Messiah*.—And in this
 sense *Origen* speaking of *Simon Magus*, and such
 like persons, says; they called themselves the
Sons of God, or the *power of God* (*y*); which he
 considers as titles of like signification: and the
 learned and ingenious Mr. *Bryant* observes, that
 so early as *Homer’s* time, and long before, the
 Priests and Votaries were often stiled the *Sons*
 and *Daughters* of the Deity they served(*z*).

It is very certain, that other words, which
 are equivalent to that of *Son*, are used in Scrip-
 ture in the same sense. Thus in the lxxxvii.
 Psalm, “I will make him my *first-born*; higher
 “than the Kings of the Earth:” and so it is
 said, “*Israel* is my *first-born*(*a*).” And the
 words *only Son*, appear to mean in some places,
 the *most beloved* or *favoured*; as when *Isaac* is
 called the *only Son* of *Abraham*, though *Ishmael*
 was then living(*b*). And *Solomon* is called the
only Son of his mother, when she had other
 Children by *David*; as is observed by Bishop

(*x*) *John* x. 34, 35. (*y*) *Contra Cels.* lib. I. p. 44.
 and 64. (*z*) *Bryant*, vol. II. p. 446. (*a*) *Ex.*
 iv. (*b*) *Gen.* xxii. 12 to 14.

Pearson(c). And so the words must be explained in the *Canticles* (d); my dove, my undefiled, is *only one*; she is the *only one* of her mother; she is the choice one of her that bare her; and yet she had at that time a sister(e).—In the New Testament God is said in the same sense to do many things, that Christ may be the *first-born* of many brethren(f): and he is called the *first-born* of the whole Creation(g). Upon which Dr. *Hammond* remarks; that, besides the ordinary notion of first-born (which cannot so well refer here to Christ's eternal Generation) it is used sometimes for a *Lord*, or *Person in power*; who hath the *privilege* of the first-born, *dominion* over all his brethren; and is so used for a Prince(h).—And God hath promised in the Revelation of St. *John*, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things;” and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son(i). Here the future Sonship of him that overcometh is to be by Inheritance; as St. *Paul* describes the Sonship of Christ to be: And these texts all relate to a State of *favour* and *exaltation*, and not to a *literal generation*; because the Persons are supposed to have an existence, *before* they were made the first-born. Besides, in a literal Sense,

(c) I *Chron.* iii. 1, 2, 3.—*Pearson*, 139. (d) *Cant.* vi. 9. (e) *Cant.* viii. 8. (f) *Rom.* viii. 29. (g) *Col.* i. 15. (h) *Psl.* lxviii. 27.—*Job* xviii. 13, &c. (i) *Rev.*

there can be but *one* first-born: whereas the righteous are said to come to the general *assembly* and *Church of the first-born* *πρωτόγονων* (k). And consequently, the word can only signify in this place, *dignity* and *privilege*; the privilege of becoming *Sons of God* by adoption, and *Heirs of God*, through Christ; as the Apostle speaks in several places (l).

At other times the Apostles carry-on the figure, without mentioning *Adoption*; confining it to a Sonship by *Generation*: and yet, even here, the *Generation* is *figurative*; as, every one that loveth God is *begotten* of God (m): and whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is *begotten* of God. How is this consistent with the literal sense of the words, that Christ is the *only begotten*? And he is said to beget us by the word of Truth (n); which explains the Figure. And in the same sense the Ministers of the Gospel are said to *beget Sons*, when they convert to Christianity; as St. Paul says of Onesimus, I have *begotten* thee through the Gospel; and therefore calls him his *Son*, *begotten* in his bonds (o).

It is moreover remarkable; that the title *Son of God* was given to the *Jehovah Angel* by Philo (p); and this, without any notion of a literal generation from the Father's Substance: and it

(k) Heb. xii. 23. (l) Gal. iv. 5.—Rom. viii. 23, &c.

(m) John iv. 7. (n) Jam. i. 8. (o) I Cor. iv. 15.

—Phil. 10. (p) Allix Jewish Ch. p. 134.

is allowed by very learned Christians, that the Evangelists spake the same language with *Philo* and the Jews of that age: and it is therefore probable, that the phrase was then understood *figuratively*; according to the eastern dialect. But be that as it may, we know that the Sons of *Seth* were called the *Sons of God* (*q*); and the Angels (*r*), and *Israel* (*s*), and *Adam* (*t*); and *Christ* has given power to all who believe in him to become the *Sons of God* (*u*); and to be partakers of the divine Nature (*x*); and we are used to much harder figures of speech, in the prophetic language; where God is described not only as a *Father*, but a *Husband* (*y*), and a *Shepherd* of his people; and they are called his *Spouse*, his *Flock*, his *Vineyard*, and are said to be *married* to him (*z*); and to be *fed* and *planted* by him: And in short, there can be no more reason for Christians to believe a *literal Generation* of *Christ* from the *Father's Substance*, merely because he is called the *Son of God*; than to suppose the same of Angels and Men, who are also called the Sons of God; and were formerly believed to be also consubstantial with Him.

(*q*) *Gen.* vi. 2. (*r*) *Job* i. 6. xxxviii. 7. (*s*) *Ex.*
iv. 22.—*Hos.* i. 10.—*Jer.* xxxi. 9. (*t*) *Luke* iii. 28.
(*u*) *John* i. 12.—*Rom.* viii. 14, 19.—*Phil.* xi. 15.—*John*,
iii. 1, 2. (*x*) *II Pet.* i. 4. (*y*) *Jer.* xxxi. 32.
(*z*) *Jer.* iii. 14.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

The Conclusion.

FROM the whole of what has been said in the foregoing Chapters, concerning the philosophical notions about the antemundane generation of the Son of God; (a subject, never once spoken-of through the whole new Testament;) I shall make the following Observations and Conclusions.

I. That the doctrine of the *homöousians*, which supposes the Substance of the *Son* of God to be the *infinite* and *impassible* Substance of the *Father*; is inconsistent with the belief, that He did actually descend from Heaven, and suffer pain and death. And therefore a consistent Christian must either deny his descent and suffering; as our most orthodox Divines have not scrupled to do (*a*): or else he must give-up the belief of

(*a*) Dr. *South* says; it is *impossible*, for the divine Nature of Christ to come down from Heaven—Dr. *Sherlock* says; that *properly* it cannot be—Bishop *Fowler*; that he could not *properly* come down from Heaven, any more than God the Father; from whom he is inseparable—Bishop *Bull*; that his descent was *quasi*—Dr. *Waterland*; that it was only in *appearance*. *Cyril*, *Epiphanius*, and the Councils; that it was only a Soul and Body that felt the pain of the Cross; the Substance of Christ, which was with God in the beginning, being impassible. See Letter III. Postscript.

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the *homöousian* doctrine. The former of these Doctrines, viz. that the same person, who was in the beginning with God, did actually descend and suffer; is founded on plain words of Scripture; the latter, that he *did not*, and *could not* descend and suffer; depends merely upon the decrees of Councils and metaphysical Argument.

2. In canvassing this Question, there is no trusting to the opinions either of the Fathers or Councils; the opinions of both having been shewn to be contradictory to one another; and the Councils, to have been carried-on too often by Force or Fraud and the Decrees of Councils corrupted or forged.

3. On the other side of the question, we find; that the *Antenicens*, who in general believed the Son of God to be the Angel of the Covenant; and the modern very respectable Divines quoted in the last chapter; and others mentioned in the tenth note of the first letter, and many other learned and pious Divines, believed; that the Son of God did actually descend from Heaven, and feel the pains of the Cross, in the very *same* Person, Nature, and Substance, in which he was in the beginning with God: and consequently, was passible in that Nature and Substance. And this opinion agrees, not only with the Apostles Creed, as it is called; but with the new Testament itself, from whence all
Creeds

Creeds ought to be taken. And therefore there is no appearance of probability, in supposing it to be heretical; or that it is a greater sign of obstinacy or depravity of mind, to maintain this side of the question; than the other, which is called the Orthodox opinion by the Party which holds it. For though the *homöousian* doctrine prevails at present, in the *European* establishments; it is well known, that this is not the Case in Asia; where the ancient Faith of the *Antenicens* is still preserved: which the *Europeans* look upon as a Novelty or Innovation in the Christian Faith. For as Archbishop *Laud* somewhere observes, very well; “When
 “Errors are grown-up by Age and Continu-
 “ance; they, which speak for the Truth,
 “though it be far older, are ordinarily chal-
 “lenged for bringing-in new Opinions.” Time was, that the whole World rejected the *homöousian* doctrine; as I have observed: and it is remarkable; that the whole Race of the Gothic Kings was against it. And if it be true, that the Nestorian Council under Copronymus decreed the Arians to be orthodox, as *Baronius* asserts (*b*); and that they denied the Son to be consubstantial with the Father, as *Cornelius a Lapide* tells us (*c*); and worship Christ as the Arians do (*d*): the opposers of the homöousian

(*b*) Ad. an. 754. sect. 25.(*c*) On Matt. xxviii. 19.(*d*) Ad an. 690. sect. 5.

doctrine must be greatly the most numerous in Asia at present^(e). It is therefore ridiculous for the Europeans to think of determining the question by a majority of Votes among their own Sects. And the more so, when we consider; that even the most Orthodox among them have long ago deserted the great *Athanasius*, the bulwark of their party. For not a man, who calls himself a homöousian, has dared for many years to defend the doctrine of a Perichoresis; though *Athanasius* declares it to be so necessary, to keep the three divine Substances together; that, without the help of it, the homöousian doctrine is no better than Tritheism.

4. It is certain, that no man, who thinks of building his Faith upon any but a sandy foundation; can rest contented with the notion, that his Religion is inconsistent with itself; or contradicts his understanding: it becomes every Christian therefore, for his own satisfaction, as well as for the cause of Christianity, to be always ready to give an answer to every one that asketh him a Reason of the hope that is in him, *I Pet. iii. 15.* And no Christian, whatever his pretences may be, can possibly believe the *Catholic Religion* (or the Religion of the Church he belongs to) to be true; as long as he sees, that it maintains such doctrines; as

(e) *Sandii Hist. Enuc. lib. I. p. 189. lib. III. 42. Edit. Cosmop.*

contradict the *Christian Verity*, or the Religion of the Gospel. The opposition between these two Rules of Faith, has occasioned the Introduction of all our Errors; or rather, the Introduction of our Errors has occasioned the opposite Rules of Faith: and these Errors will always continue in the Church, till this *deadly wound* is healed; and the Religion of the Churches gives way to the Religion of the Gospel. But this cannot be expected; because the Religion of the Churches is a Religion, which men have made for themselves; and is generally established by the Authority of the State.—However, this is the only cure that can possibly be found for this Evil. “This only I insist on,” says Dr. *Whitby*; “that the controversies concerning the Trinity,” [and I may add, on other material Subjects also;] “cannot certainly be determined by the Writings of the Fathers, the decrees of Councils, or by the undoubted documents of universal Tradition; nor is any thing to be believed or safely asserted, but what can be plainly proved from the holy Scriptures(*f*).” The Scripture is the only Authority, to which Europeans and Asiatics both will bow; and by which they will be determined: and, where the Scripture is silent, we have learned, by the experience of former ages, that the interposition of human Authority

(*f*) *Whitby* Dis. Mod. Præf. 111.

has

has always done more harm than good. No Christian was ever persecuted, fined, imprisoned, or burned, by Christians; for not subscribing to the word of *God*: but very many have been, for not subscribing to the words of *Men*: and it appears at the same time, from experience and fact; that the methods, which have been taken by Councils and Synods, to establish Unity of Opinion by human decrees; have been the very cause of their Divisions and Animosities. While the Christians were contented with the words of Scripture, that Christ was *of God* or from God; ἐκ Θεοῦ there was no division upon the question—when they added to this, by way of explanation, and required it to be believed; that he was ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ, *of or from the Substance* of God; they divided into sects, and murdered one another. When they attempted to explain what they meant by the words, *out of the Substance of God*; they subdivided. And this must naturally be the case, upon the Imposition of human Comments on disputed Texts. Whereas, if the Words of Scripture, and what plainly and undeniably follows from them, will not unite men in the same sentiments upon any Text; we may be well assured, that there can be no necessity for union of sentiment upon that Text; much less any necessity of murdering one another, for disagreeing about the explanation of it. When
Christ

Christ preached to the common People, he did not expect them to have clear conceptions on metaphysical subjects ; but only on plain practical Truths.

5. As all parties before the Nicene Council did agree, that we ought to honour the Son, even as we honour the Father; *Jo. v. 23.* this confession ought to be looked-upon as a sufficient Evidence of the same Faith; without specifying the metaphysical Nature of either: and bind us together in the same Communion, and unite us together in Love as Members of the same body: however we may differ from one another in points of Philosophy.

To conclude; there have been so many divisions made in the Church, so much ill-blood raised, and so many dreadful murders committed, under the pretence of preserving the peace of the Church, on both sides of the question upon these abstruse subjects; in which it is impossible for men of the greatest Learning and Piety to be all of a mind: that it is time to return to the plain Doctrine and Spirit of the Gospel; and to understand it, every man for himself with the best help he can get, as well as he is able; and God will require no more of any Man: and so to become one fold under one Shepherd, and bear with one another's errors and infirmities. For the breach of Charity is a more heinous offence in the sight of God; than a thousand errors upon this, or any other metaphysical Subject whatsoever.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NUMBER I.

An Epistle of *Arius*, &c. to *Alexander* Bishop
of *Alexandria*.

*To our blessed Father and Bishop Alexander, the
Presbyters and Deacons send Health in the Lord.*

THE Faith which we have received from
our Ancestors, and learned from THEE,
most blessed Father is this: We believe ONE
God, alone unbegotten, alone eternal, alone
without beginning, alone true, alone immortal,
alone wise, alone immense, alone good, alone
almighty, alone Judge; the Creator, Ruler,
and Governor of all things, unmoved and im-
mutable;

mutable; just, good, the God as well of the Law, as of the New Testament. Who begat the only-begotten God, before all sempiternal times (*sempiterna tempora*); by whom He created the ages and all other things. Moreover we say; that he begat him *really*, and not in *appearance* only; and formed him a substantial Being of such a Nature, as not to be subject to change or alteration; a perfect creature of God, but not like any other. [Made, but not like other things: so *Hilary* reads.] Not, as *Valentinus* asserted, that this offspring was an emission from the Father; nor, as *Manichæus* held, that the same offspring was a part *consubstantial* with the Father—nor, as *Sabellius*, who divided the Unity [*Hilary* says, who induced a Unity]; and called him a Son-Father: nor, as *Hieracas*, as a light from a light, or a lamp divided into two:—Nor, in such a manner, as that, when he had existed before, he was begotten *afterwards*; and was then created into a Son: according as you yourself, blessed Father, in the middle of the Church and Session of the Brethren, oftentimes did confute those who asserted these things.—But, as we said, we confess that He, being created by the will of God, received life and existence from the Father; before all times and ages; and by that Creation the Father bestowed on him Glory and Splendor.—And we ought not to think, when the Father
gave

gave to him the possession of all things, that he deprived himself of any thing, which he contained in himself in an unbegotten manner. For he is the *Fountain* of all things. Wherefore there are *Three Hypostases*; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And God, as he is the Cause of all things, so he is the *Only one* of all things without beginning. But the Son, being begotten before Time, and created and made before Ages, did not exist before he was begotten: but being begotten without time and before all things, he is *alone* produced by the Father *alone*. For he is not coeternal with the Father, nor coingenit [unbegotten together] with the Father; nor hath he his existence together with the Father: as some speak, (concerning relations τὰ πρὸς τὸν) who make two unbegotten Principles. But, as Unity is the Principle of all things, so God is before all things; wherefore he is also before his Son *Christ*: as we have learned from you, when you preached it in the middle of the Church.—Wherefore, as He received of God Existence and Life and Splendor, and whatever else was conferred on him; on this account God is his Origin and Principle. For God is before him, and above him (*prior ac princeps*), as being his God; and he was before him, because *Christ* came forth from him. But if we understand these and the like expressions, *I came*, and I

come from the Bowels of the Father, as part of the *Consubstantiality*; or an *Emission*, or *Production*, [*προβολή*], as some do; the Father must be compounded, divisible, and mutable, and even according to them, corporeal; so that as far as in them lies, God, who is without Body, will be liable to all the accidents of Body. We wish you well in the Lord, blessed Father.

Arius	} Prelbyters.	Euzoius	} Deacons.	Secundus of Pentapolis	} Bishops.
Cethales		Lucius		Theonas, an African	
Achilles		Julius		Pistus, placed by the	
Carpones		Menas		<i>Arians at Alexandria</i>	
Sarmatus		Helladius		See <i>Epiph. Hær.</i> 69. § 7, 8.	
Arius		Cajus		<i>Basil</i> , p. 113. <i>Hil.</i> lib. iv. and vi. de Trin. <i>Basil</i> , p. 50. and 87.	

During this Controversy, Bishop *Alexander* was for some time doubtful which party to espouse; one while approving of one party, and another while of the opposite one. But at last he assented to the *Homöousians*; and ordered *Arius* to reject the reasons of the other side, and follow the same opinion with himself. *Niceph.* viii. c. 5. And when he could not persuade him, and many of the Bishops and Clerks of that diocese agreed with *Arius*; Bishop *Alexander* excommunicated them all. And, while these things were doing, *Arius* wrote the following letter to *Eusebius*, Bishop of *Nicomedia*.

NUMBER

NUMBER II.

Arius's Epistle to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia(a).

To my dear Lord, man of God, faithful, orthodox Eusebius; Arius, whom Bishop Alexander persecutes unjustly upon account of the Truth which overcometh all things, which you also protect; health in the Lord.

AS my father *Ammonius* was going to *Nicomedia*, I thought I should act agreeably to my Order and Duty, to address you by him; and at the same time inform that settled Love and Affection which you bear to the brethren for the sake of God and Christ, how greatly the Bishop opposes and persecutes us; leaving no stone unturned, to banish us innocent men out of the City; because we do not assent to him, when he teaches publicly in this manner.—The Father is always, the Son always, the Father and Son together. The Son coexists with God in an unbegotten manner. God does not præ-exist before the Son, one single moment: not even in thought. God is always, the Son always; the Son is out of the Father himself.

(a) *Niceph. lib. viii. c. 9.—Euseb. apud Theod. lib v.—Epiphan. Hær. 69.*

And because *Eusebius* your brother (Bishop) of *Cæsarea*, and *Theodotus* (Bishop) of *Laodicea*, and *Paulinus* (Bishop) of *Tyre*, and *Athanasius* (Bishop) of *Anarsarbus*, and *Gregorius* (Bishop) of *Berytas*, and *Aetius* (Bishop) of *Lydda* in *Palestine*, in short all the Orientals assert; that God, who is without beginning, is prior to the Son; they are anathematized: except only *Philogonius* (Bishop) of *Antioch*, *Hellanicus* (Bishop) of *Tripolitanum*, and *Macarius* (Bishop) of *Jerusalem*; who are Heretics and unlearned. Some of which say, that *Christ* is an Eructation, others a Promotion, others coingenit (unbegotten with the Father;) whose impieties we cannot bear, though the Heretics should threaten us with ten thousand deaths.—But we have professed, and continue to profess our assertion and opinion; that the Son is not unbegotten, nor by any means a part of the unbegotten; that he did not exist of, or from, any Subject; [any thing before existing, as the Subject out of which he was made] but by Will and Design before times and ages; and that he is plenary God only begotten (πλήρης Θεὸς μονογένης) invariable, and was not before he was begotten or created, defined or made, for he was not unbegotten. We suffer persecutions, because we have said, the Son hath a beginning; but God hath no beginning. Upon this account we suffer Persecutions; and because we have asserted, that he

he is of, or out of, nothing. But this we have asserted, in order to deny that he is a part of God; or existed from any Subject. Upon this account we suffer persecution: the rest you know. God grant you health; and remember our affliction: O truly *Collucianist*(b).

Socrates has given us the following letter of
Constantine to *Arius*.

Constantine Victor Maximus Augustus, to *Arius*.

IT was some time ago signified to your Gravity, to come to our Court to be introduced to our Presence; which makes me wonder, that you did not immediately comply with the Order. Now therefore upon the receipt of this, make haste, and come in a public carriage; that, after experiencing our benignity and regard, you may return to your own native Country. God preserve you, my well-beloved. V. Cal. Dec. *Soc. lib. i. c. 25.*

Upon the receipt of this Letter, we are told, that *Arius* presently set-out for *Constantinople*;

(b) *Lucian* the Martyr, who suffered under *Maximinus*, held the same Doctrine; and *Dupin* says, all the Chiefs of the party were his disciples; one of these was *Eusebius* of *Cæsarea* (famous for his friendship with *Pamphilus* another Martyr), who solemnly declares the faith he held to have been the faith of the primitive Church.

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with *Euzoïus*, who had been degraded with him: that the Emperor admitted them to his presence, received them graciously; and commanded them immediately to draw-up in writing a Libel (c) of their Faith: which they accordingly did; and it is as follows.

NUMBER III.

The Creed of Arius and Euzoïus, delivered to Constantine.

Arius and Euzoïus to our most religious and most pious Lord, Constantine, the Emperor.

According to the order of your Piety, most acceptable to God, our Lord the Emperor, we do declare our Faith; and in writing profess, in the presence of God, that we and all our adherents do believe as followeth.

WE believe in one God, the Father Almighty; and in his Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord; who was made by him, begotten before all ages, God the Word, by whom all things were made both in Heaven and in Earth: who

(c) The word *Libel* is used by the Translator of *Eusebius*, *Socrates*, &c. to signify a short Writing, Schedule, or Scroll: the Greek word is βιβλίον. The Author has ventured to take the same liberty.

came down from Heaven, and was incarnate, and suffered, and rose again, and ascended into the Heavens; and will come again to judge the quick and dead. And in the Holy Ghost, in the resurrection of the flesh, the life of the world to come, the Kingdom of Heaven, and one Catholic Church of God, extending from one End of the Earth to the other. This Faith we have received from the holy Gospels; the Lord himself saying to his disciples, *Go, teach all Nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* If we do not thus believe these things; and truly admit of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the whole Catholic Church and the Scriptures, which we believe in all things, teach us; God be our Judge, in this world; and in that which is to come. Wherefore, most holy Emperor, we beseech your Piety; that, as we are Ecclesiastics, and hold the Faith and Sense both of the Church and holy Scriptures; by thy pacific and religious Piety, thou wouldst rejoin us to our mother the Church; all controversies and vain wranglings being silenced; that we and the Church, living in tranquillity, may join our usual prayers with one accord for the peaceable and pious state of your kingdom, and all your Family. See *Soc. lib. I. ch. 26.*

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This form of Faith so pleased the Emperor; that he not only restored *Arius*, but recalled *Secundus*, Bishop of *Ptolemais*, and those that were with him, and *Theonas*, Bishop of *Marmarica*, &c. But this could not be *Arius* the Arch-heretic, as is supposed: because we are told by *Socrates*, lib. I. c. 33, that this *Arius* and *Euzoïus* were not restored and joined to the Catholic Church, before the Jerusalem Synod, in the year of Christ 335: whereas *Arius* the Arch-heretic was recalled from exile long before; as the “Penitentiary Libel” of *Eusebius* and *Theognis* attests, *Socr.* lib. I. ch. 14. for these returned from banishment in 328; and this libel mentions the return of the Arch-heretic, as what had happened some time before. And *Valesius* refers to the Second Book of Ecclesiastical Observations, to prove that *Arius* was dead before the *Jerusalem* Synod; and consequently all the silly Story of his death, which is told by *Socrates*, lib. I. 37, 38. *Soz.* II. 28. *Athanasius* in *Theod.* I. and 4. &c. was an invention of the *Homöousians*, to cast a slur upon his character.

NUMBER IV.

*Viſtor Conſtantius Maximus Auguſtus, to Alexander
and Arius.*

WE underſtand that this was the ground of the preſent Controverſy.—That you, *Alexander*, enquired of your Preſbyters, what every particular man's opinion was concerning a certain Text of Scripture; or rather concerning the part of a fruitleſs controverſy: and that you, *Arius*, inconfiderately vented ſuch ſentiments, as you ought either not to have conceived at firſt; or, if you had had ſuch conceptions, it had been your duty to have let them be buried in Silence; upon this a diſſenſion has been raiſed between you; Communion is reſuſed; and the moſt religious populace, rent into two factions, is ſeparated from the harmonious Unity of the whole body—Wherefore let both of you, mutually pardoning each other, quietly accept of what your fellow ſervant doth reaſonably adviſe to you. But what is that? It was your duty, neither to have aſked ſuch queſtions at firſt; nor if propoſed, to have made any return thereto. For ſuch queſtions as no law does neceſſarily limit or preſcribe, but are propoſed by the contentiouſneſs of an unprofitable vacancy

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cancy from business; (although they may be framed to exercise and employ our natural parts, yet) we ought to confine within our own breasts, and not inconsiderately divulge them in public assemblies; nor unadvisedly commit them to the ears of the vulgar. For what person among a thousand is sufficiently qualified, either accurately to comprehend the full efficacy and nature of things so sublime and profound, or to explicate them according to their worth and dignity?—Or, should any man look upon this as an easy performance; how small a part of the vulgar will he induce to be fully persuaded thereof? Or what man can, without danger of falling into gross Errors, insist upon the accurate discussion of such nice Controversies?—In questions therefore, of this nature, Loquacity should be bridled and restrained; least either through the frailty of our nature, (we being not able to explicate what we proposed) or through the slowness of our auditors understanding what they are taught, being unable accurately to apprehend our discourse, from one of these causes the people be reduced to a necessity of Blasphemy or Schism.—Wherefore let an unwary question, and an inconsiderate answer, with both of you mutually pardon each other. For this contest is not kindled upon an occasion of any *Principal* or *Chief* Commandment of our Law: *neither have you introduced any new Heresy* concerning the Worship of God. But you both hold one
and

and the same opinion; so that you may easily close in a consent of Communion with each other.—For whilst you thus pertinaciously contend about *Trifles*, and things of no importance; it is not convenient that so numerous a people of God should be under your care and government; because of your dissension with one another: nor is it only misbecoming, but it is also judged to be altogether unlawful. Now that I may advertise your Prudence by a smaller instance, I will tell you, You know, even the Philosophers themselves, how they are all united in the profession of one sect; when as, notwithstanding, they frequently disagree in some part of their assertions: But although they do sometimes jar, in the very perfection of Knowledge; yet because of the agreement and union of their Sect, they do again close in a mutual consent.—Now if it be so amongst them; it will certainly be much more reasonable, that you, who are the ministers of the most high God, should in like manner be unanimous in the profession of the same Religion.—But let us now with more accuracy and greater attention inspect and deliberate upon what has been said; whether it be just and equitable; that because of the *trivial, vain,* and pertinacious contests between you about *Words*, brethren should be set in array as it were against brethren: and that, that venerable Assembly should, upon your account, who

who contend with one another about things *so slight and in no wise necessary*, be rent asunder by an impious variance.—These contests are *poor and mean*; and do become a *childish Ignorance*, rather than agree with the gravity of Presbyters and prudent men.—Let us of our own accord depart from the Temptations of the Devil.—Our great God, the Saviour of all Men, hath reached forth a light common to all Men. By the assistance of whose Providence, give us leave who are his servants, that we may successfully finish this our Endeavour; that by our exhortation, diligence, and earnest admonitions, we may reduce you to a Unity of Assembly. For in regard, as we have already said, you hold the same Faith, and have the same Sentiments of our Religion; and since the Commandment of the Law doth in all its parts inclose all in general in one Consent and Purpose of mind: let not this thing, which has raised a mutual division between you, (in as much as it appertaineth not to the power and efficacy of Religion in general;) by any means make a Separation and Faction amongst you.—These things we speak, not to necessitate you to be all of one opinion concerning this *foolish, idle Controversy*; of what sort soever it be. For the precious value of the Assembly may be preserved entirely among you, and one and the same Communion be retained; although there be interchangeably amongst

amongst you a great diversity of sentiments in things of the smallest import. For we do not all mean the same in all things; neither is there one disposition or opinion in all of us. Therefore concerning the divine Providence let there be among you one Faith, one meaning, and one covenant of the Deity.—But as for these *slender* and *light* questions; which with so much niceness you dispute of, and make researches into, among yourselves; although therein you do not all agree in the same opinion, yet it is your duty to confine them in your own thoughts; and keep them within the secret repositories of your own minds.—Let therefore an unalterable and excellent common friendship, a belief of the truth, the honour of God, and a religious observance of his Laws, remain amongst you, firm and immoveable; return to a mutual friendship and charity: restore to the whole body of the people their usual Embraces. And be you yourselves (having, as it were, purified your own souls) acquainted again, and renew your familiarity with one another. For friendship is frequently more sweet and pleasing, after the occasion of the enmity is laid aside; return to a reconciliation again. Restore therefore to us peaceable and serene days, and nights void of solicitude; that, during the residue of our life, we may have the pleasure of that pure Light, and the joy of a quiet life reserved for us. Which
if

if we shall not obtain, we must necessarily groan, and be wholly surrounded with tears: nor shall we finish the residue of our life without great disquietude.—For whilst the people of God (I mean our fellow servants) are rent asunder, by this pernicious and indiscreet dissension which they are now involved in; how is it possible for us in future to continue in a sedate temper of mind? And that you may be sensible of our excessive sorrow for this thing, [be attentive to what we shall tell you] when we lately came to the city of *Nicomedia*, we had forthwith resolved to take a journey into the *East*: But while we were hastening towards you, and by the greatest part were with you, the news of this affair quite altered our Resolution; least we should be necessitated to be a Spectator of these things, which we could not endure even to hear.—Do you therefore by your unanimity for the time to come, open the way for us in into the *East*; which by your mutual discord you have stopped up. Give us leave with joy speedily to see you and all the rest of the people; and that with an unanimous consent of praises we may offer up to God due thanks for the public agreement and liberty. *Socr. B. I. ch. 7.*

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N. B. I must warn my Reader in this place of a considerable mistake in this Letter, occasioned by not distinguishing the Kingdom of *Christ* over the *Jews* from his Kingdom over all, which is foretold by *Daniel* to commence upon his coming in the Clouds at the fall of the 4th Kingdom; and at the Sound of the 7th Trumpet, *Dan.* vii. 27. *Rev* xi. 15. Whatever therefore is said of his Reign over all before that time, is said upon the common mistake, that *Christ* has already received the Kingdom promised.

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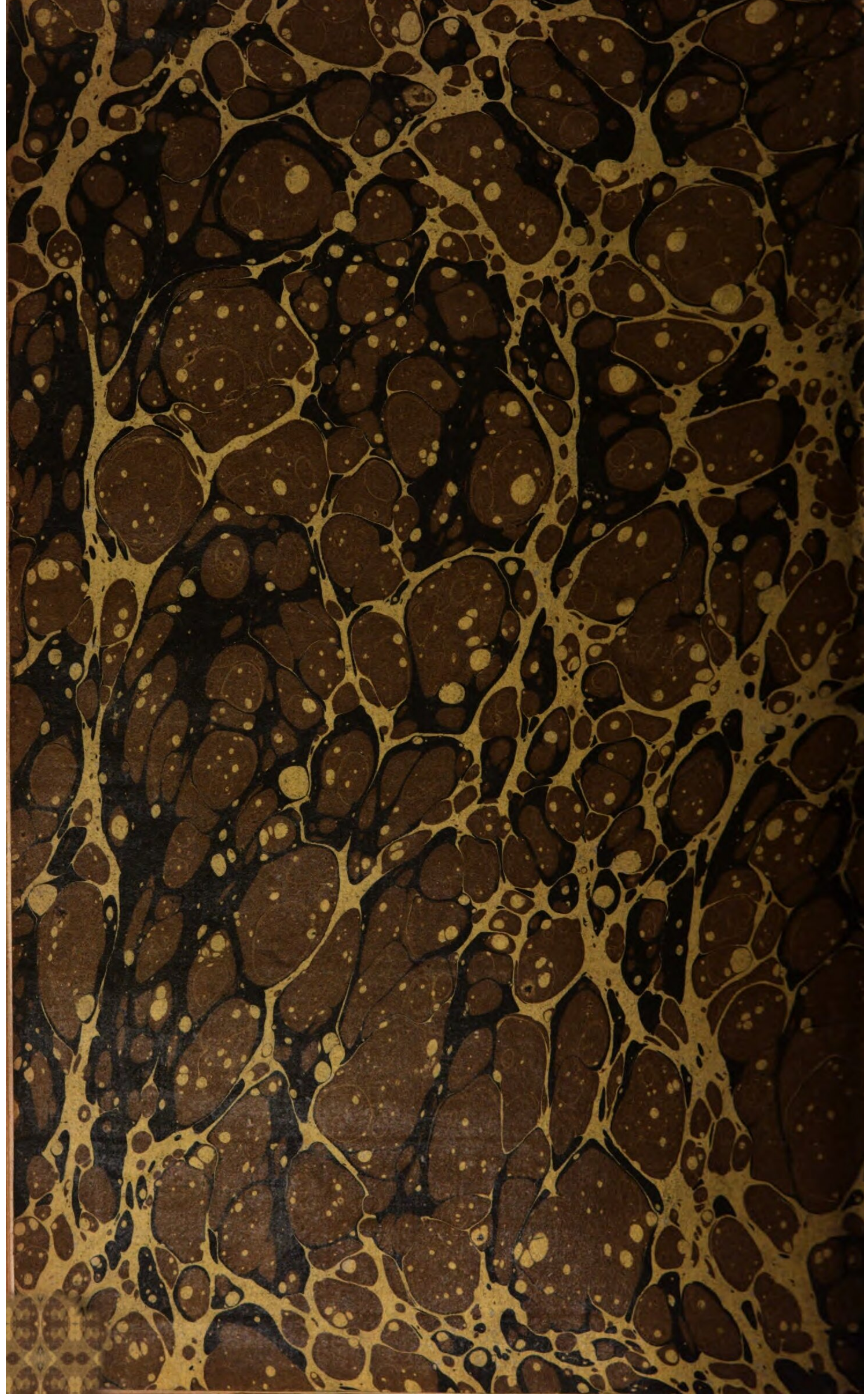
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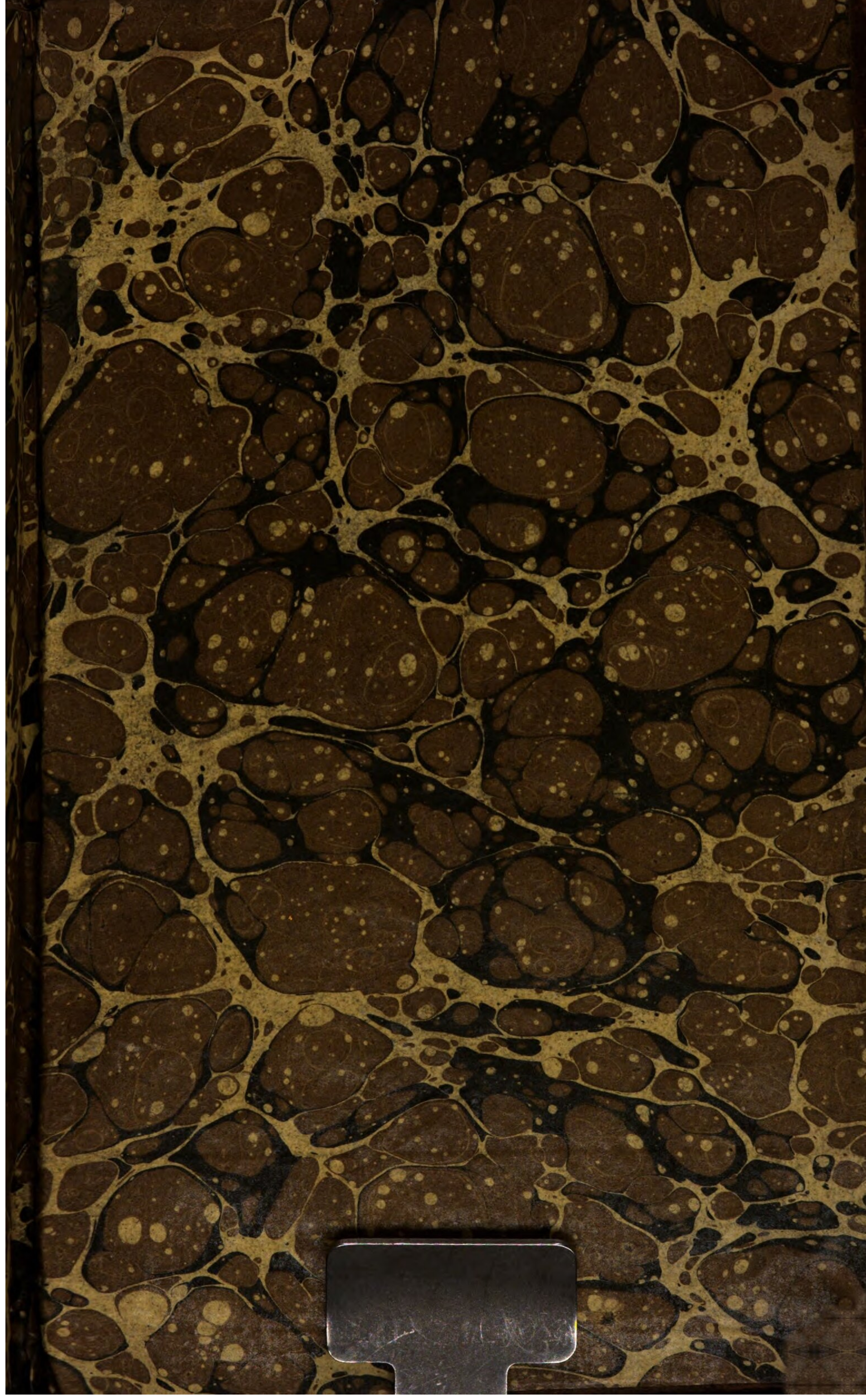
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